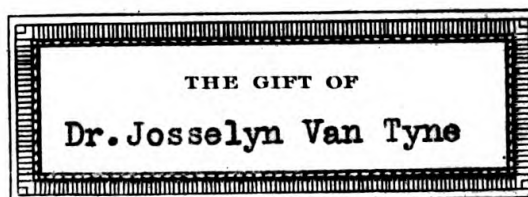
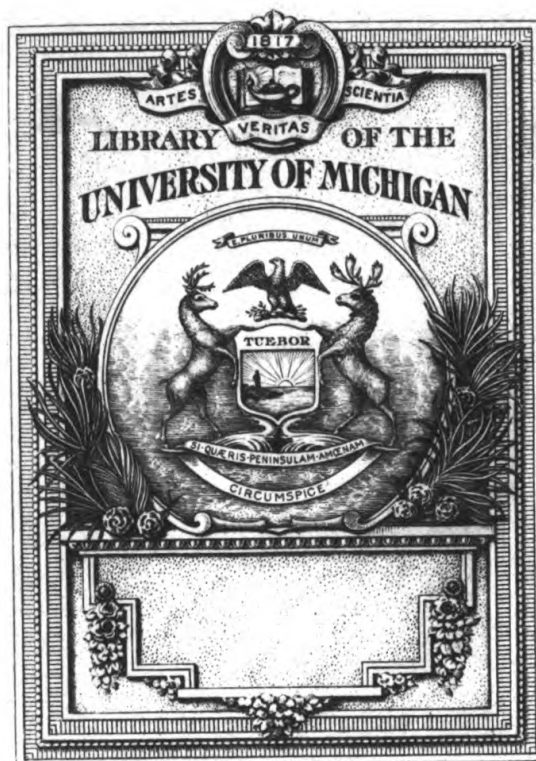


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"Louder Please!"

THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF A DEAF
MAN

EARNEST ELMO CALKINS

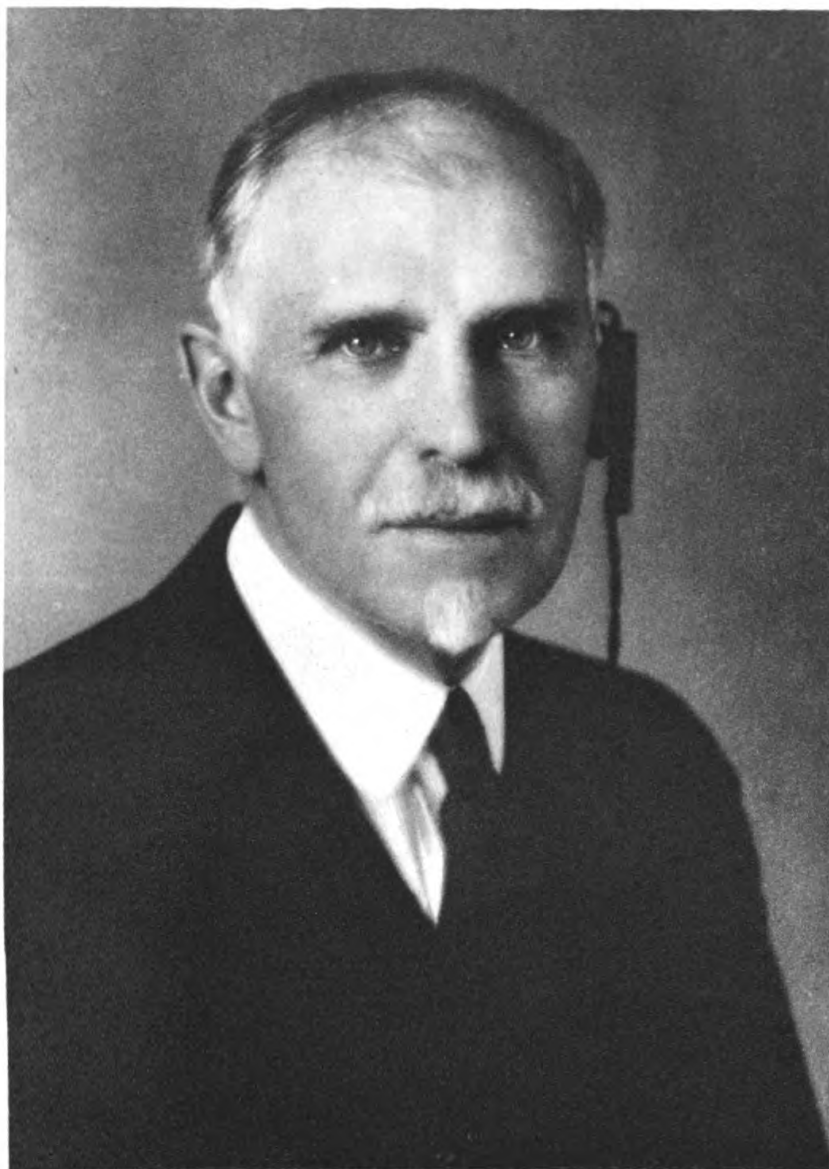


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OR

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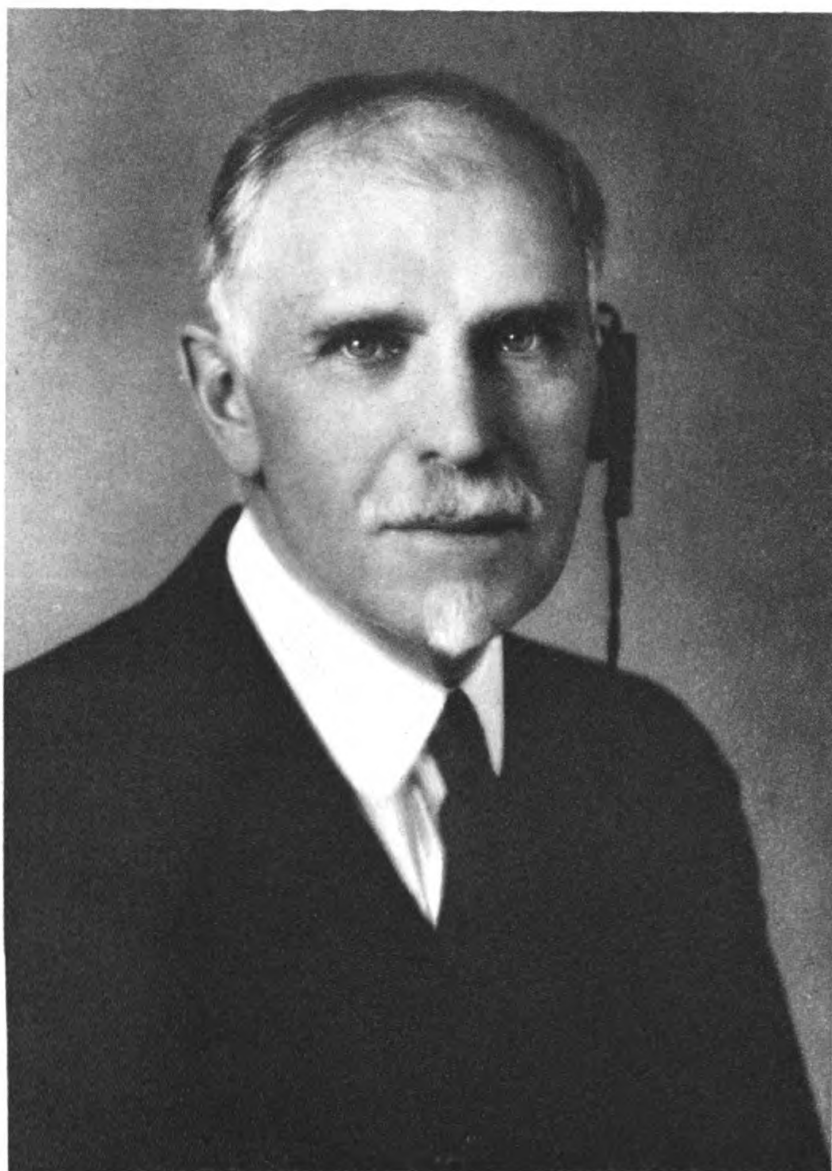
LOUDER PLEASE!

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF A DEAF MAN

BY
EARNEST ELMO CALVERT



THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS
BOSTON



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OR

Ernest Elmo Colkins



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"LOUDER PLEASE!"

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A DEAF MAN

BY
EARNEST ELMO CALKINS



Illustrated

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS
BOSTON

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Printed in the United States of America

*To my mother, my Latin teacher, my partner,
my secretary, and my wife, each of whom has
contributed something to make a deaf man's
life a little easier, this book is
gratefully dedicated*

Slacks
Gift
Dr. Gusselign Van Tyne
1-9-1934

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“LOUDER PLEASE !”

“LOUDER PLEASE!”

I

BORN, AN ADVERTISING MAN

MORE than fifty years ago, in a tiny weed-grown prairie village, — so small it has since disappeared from the map and will disappear from this book just as soon as its function as a birthplace is fulfilled, — an advertising man was born.

Of course he was not born an advertising man. Nature takes no account of anything so sophisticated, so super-natural as advertising. Even delving and spinning, the primitive employments ascribed to Adam and Eve, were not natural. Nature gives us two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and so on, — most of them badly selected for producing even advertising men, — and if you go back as far as, say, the time of Queen Elizabeth, your collective ancestors would make a community as large as the city of Cleveland — and just as mixed. From the lower tip of this vast inverted pyramid one starts to live, helped and hindered by the least common multiple of all the traits inherited from some mediæval Cleveland and all the multitude between. The blend gives our temperament,

disposition, and physique; and then education begins, and environment commences to work on us and shapes our character and tastes, and in the course of time produces garage mechanics, greengrocers, poets, and advertising agents.

In Prairie Centre it was the pleasant custom to endow a newborn boy with his father's calling. This standing jest had been invented by Jerome Joyce, the “local” — and all other editors — of the Prairie Centre *Bystander*. At least once a week the Personal column was enlivened by some such paragraph as this: —

A little blacksmith arrived last night at the home of Luke Knight, weight 7 pounds. Pass the cigars, Luke.

If the profession of advertising had existed as a recognized calling at that early date, and had the Boy's father followed it, which of course he could not have done in that pioneer outpost, — for advertising is the supreme flowering of sophisticated civilization, — then the Boy might easily have been heralded to an indifferent world by the title by which, if this chronicle ever gets that far, he is eventually to be known.

Advertising existed at that time, but no one practised it. Like electricity, it was a latent dynamic force, inherent in things, occasionally mani-

festing strange phenomena, but awaiting its Edisons and Steinmetzes to make it the servant of man.

The *Bystander* carried the "cards" of the local butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker, and "foreign" advertising of the early and primitive patent medicines — stomach bitters and horse liniments. Magazines were almost unknown. The only exemplars haughtily refused such sordid sources of revenue and confined the few leaves at the back of the book to "house announcements" of their own publications. Away off in Boston a young man named Rowell was slowly arriving at the invention of the first advertising agency.

And the Boy's father was certainly not an advertising man. He was n't even a blacksmith. But it would have puzzled the versatile local editor to assign him a gainful occupation. He was engaged at the time of the Boy's advent in preparing to move to the largest town in the next county, which plan he carried into effect just as soon as the Boy and his mother were able to travel. Travel in that day and in that country meant a springless lumber-wagon drawn by two workhorses fresh from the plough. Across the wagon was placed a sofa, the quaint forerunner of the parlor-car seat which now makes in an hour the trip the lumbering lumber-wagon was two days in consummating. Into the wagon were piled

household goods, the meagre contents of the small house where the Boy first opened his eyes. The outfit comprised the entire worldly possessions of the young couple.

Seated side by side on the sofa in this amazing equipage, the man driving with a loose rein, — for the horses needed no guiding on a road which ran in four parallel grooves, two for the wheels and two for the horses, with grass and prairie flowers growing between, — the mother holding her four months' child in her lap, they presented an Illinois version of the Flight into Egypt.

II

THE INVERTED PYRAMID

THE old Military Tract of Illinois was peopled by little bands of settlers who moved West in the first half of the last century, staked out towns, and built churches, schoolhouses, and colleges. They traveled in prairie schooners, coming for the most part from Eastern towns that themselves still showed the marks of the pioneer's axe, and which were in their turn the offshoots of the towns the first Pilgrims established on the New England coast. The tradition was handed down unbroken. The moving influence was religion and livelihood. The poem says the Pilgrims left unstained what there they found, freedom to worship God — but they made it exceedingly uncomfortable for those who disagreed with them about either freedom or worship.

The prairie pilgrims were as stern and rockbound as their prototypes and ancestors. They enforced their rigorous and intolerant doctrines not only in their churches and colleges, but in their homes as well, and they produced a new crop of rebels against authority, who likewise emigrated in search of freedom and livelihood, and who were in turn regarded by a new generation as bigoted and narrow.

And so the young people on the sofa in the lumber wagon, with their child and household goods, were Pilgrims aboard a prairie Mayflower. The mother was the first white child born in the colony that lay behind them. Her father was one of the Early Christian Fathers who helped to create a new empire in the West, square, upright, and grand, and hard as the nether stone in Deacon Melvin's flour-mill. He had eleven sons and two daughters and he brought them up according to Holy Writ as he understood it, with no allowances for either youth or nature. There was plenty of work and prayer, but no amusement. The stern old man had the qualities of Macaulay's Puritans, who objected to bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.

One day two of the younger sons, desperate for amusement, made a checkerboard. They inked squares on a smooth clean bit of plank and used red and white kernels of corn for men. They kept the vicious implements hid in the haymow and played on rainy days. This in itself was defection. The old man's idea of work was summed up in a saying that long remained a proverb among his descendants: "If it rains to-day, so we can't work, we'll build that pigpen."

But one black day the father caught his sons red-

handed. He towered above them with a face like Moses descending Sinai, split the checkerboard across his knee, and thundered: —

“My children may go to hell if they will, but not with my help.”

One by one his children went to hell.

The younger sister was the last to go. She was on her way, sitting there beside her husband and following the beflowered road across the prairie. She had made her bed, according to the melodramatic phrase, and the bed was a sofa.

When she was about ten years old pantalettes went out of style. The more fashionable girls at the village school stopped wearing them and appeared in all the shamelessness of legs. She petitioned to be allowed to follow the new style, and her request was received by her father and mother with the shocked incredulity of some modern parents whose daughters roll down their stockings and check their corsets. As between being out of the fashion and parental disapproval, — and eternal damnation, — few women hesitate. Every morning as soon as she was out of sight of the farmhouse she took off the hated pantalettes, — they unbuttoned at the knees, — folded them up, and carried them in her school-book bag. At night she put them on again and appeared demurely before the eyes of the household.

She often told this story to her children, without perceiving that the lipsticks and bobbed hair of her granddaughters, which she so earnestly deplored, furnished a striking parallel.

Of course her brothers knew of her duplicity, but they were all tarred with the same stick. Together they crept out the pantry window to attend the occasional neighborhood merrymakings, taffypulls, and bobsled rides, — few and far between, but too frequent for the father's approval.

It was thus she met the dashing young blade with the gorgeous flowered vests, who a short time after his arrival in the village had become the life of its parties. He had arrived at Prairie Centre a year or so before, driving a flea-bitten white horse attached to a green democrat wagon, laden with one-twelfth dozen Eagle Rotary Washing Machines. He had bought the “rights” to sell this contrivance in a tier of counties. His method was successful though unorthodox. He never had heard of the science of salesmanship, sales-resistance, approach, and so forth. He set up his machine, asked the farmer's wife for the dirtiest shirt, — one a farm hand had been wearing in the harvest, for choice, — plunged it into the washer, gave the handle a few turns, and sent the prospect after something it would take a few minutes to fetch. While she was gone he

removed the dirt, rubbing the garment vigorously between two brawny young fists — a strong application of what is technically known as “elbow grease.” Thus he had sold eleven machines.

At Prairie Centre he stopped and remained. He sold his last washing-machine, and the flea-bitten horse and the democrat wagon to boot. He worked at odd jobs. He was the son of a poor and unsuccessful farmer who had also come West and who also had the Biblical family, in this instance eleven sons and daughters. He had come West, not impelled by the energy and will of the empire-builders, but much as a periwinkle goes on its travels, pried loose from his rock by some force stronger than he and drifting in the way of least resistance until he came to rest, caught in some quiet corner, where his tentacles again grew to the rock. He had no “faculty.” He had taken up land in Ohio and cultivated it in an aimless manner. His sons worked for neighboring farmers and turned in their earnings, but one by one they quit and started off by themselves. The father failed to make good to his quarter section, and then another wave picked him up and carried him farther West.

He was illiterate, seldom sober, and his wife smoked a cob pipe. Still, among his ancestors was at least one of that group of immigrants who are to

this country what William and his conquerors were to England, — so earnestly sought by would-be joiners of genealogical societies, — no less a one than the great Elder Brewster himself. But the old man never knew it, and a lot of good it would have done him if he had. He would not even have understood it. After all, there were one hundred and twenty-seven men and women in the world in 1620 who were just as much his ancestors as old Brewster. And the whole lot were not enough to prevail against shiftlessness and lack of gumption.

His son was the joint product of all those ancestors, shaped and moulded and modified by environment. He had arrived in a town where even the most lax looked upon him as a daring adventurer, and their elders with something like horror. He drank, chewed tobacco, swore, and played cards. What the Moses of the checkerboard thought of cards defies description. But he had one accomplishment that lightened up the somewhat heavy parties of the time. He had a way of saying things. His wit was sometimes a little coarse; he had no reverence for anything; but it was wit. The halo of his vices added to his social popularity. The girl who resolutely risked eternal damnation for the sake of being freed from pantalettes was not going to be deterred by any sort of parental au-

thority in the matter of choosing a husband.

Besides, just about this time her own loved and gentle mother, worn out with bearing fifteen children — the twins, Romulus and Remus, had died in infancy — and possibly with the strain of living with so upright a man, had gone to the only pleasure her husband's stern creed permitted. And he, the uncompromising, who knew sin and never flinched, was an easy victim to hypocrisy. The one wealthy family of the village possessed an estimable relative, already safely beyond the temptations of youth, the village poetess whose works appeared regularly in the Poet's Corner of the weekly newspaper. Looking for a comfortable place to deposit this burden, they decided that the acres of the old man, improved by years of unremitting toil by himself and his stalwart sons, were now sufficiently valuable to insure her future, and they made a match of it. The new wife did the rest. Only the two younger children were left. The boy fled. The girl married.

And that is how she happens to be sitting beside the descendant of Elder Brewster *et al*, journeying toward the Promised Land, with a very young advertising man lying in her lap.

Thus the Boy with whom this study is concerned was launched in life, with a miscellaneous and haphazard equipment of mental and physical qualities

gathered from a long line of diverse ancestors, none of them more sharply contrasting than the two that stood respectively as maternal and paternal grandfathers. One took life too hard; the other took it too easily. The Boy took after neither, but remained a sort of human cocktail, with a jigger of rock-ribbed Puritanism and a jigger of irresponsible liberalism, into which was introduced a dash of bitters by the fact that Nature closed his ears before he had had much time to use them. His formative years were passed in a raw new town in western Illinois, which, just thirty years before the sofa-crowned lumber-wagon drew up before its pine hotel at the end of a hot July day, had been nothing but unbroken prairie. Here he was to receive all the education that mattered; and looking back on those years, two or three experiences seem to stand out as the real influences which shaped his life.

I knew this Boy well. He is to me the most interesting subject in the world, for in the course of time he became me. But for the first years of his life it is easier to consider him objectively, which is really the way our boyhood appears to all of us.

III

LINE UPON LINE

I CAN just see the Boy at the other end of fifty years, looking quite small and far-off, as if through the wrong end of an opera glass, reading his first book. He was then about four years old.

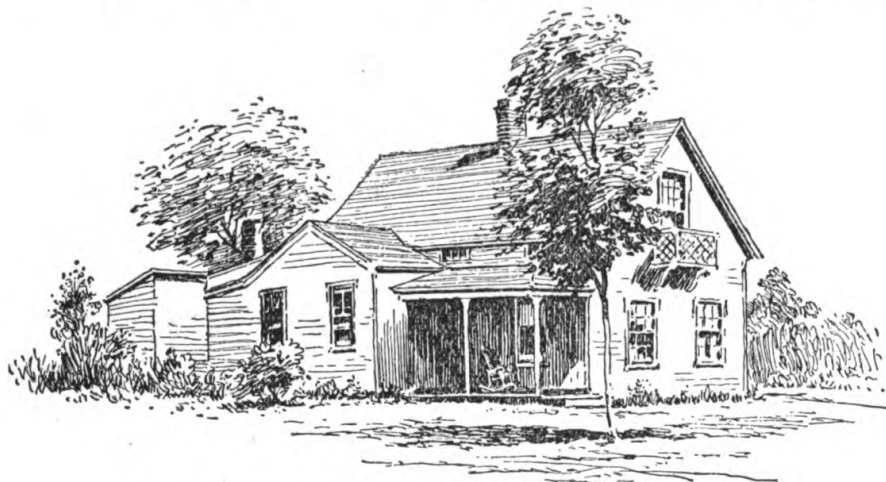
He is sitting in his own personal chair, which is so small that the grown-up chair in front of him serves admirably as a lectern. The book is small also, but the title seems rather out of scale. Here it is, with bibliographical exactness: —

Line upon Line, or a Second Series of the Earliest Religious Instruction the Infant Mind is Capable of Receiving, with Verses Illustrative of the Subject, by the Author of the "Peep of Day." American Tract Society, New York.

No date, but a fading writing on the flyleaf says that it was a gift to Mahlon from his sister Celia in 1846. And Celia and Mahlon were respectively brother and sister of the Boy's mother. So the book was just a bit of flotsam and jetsam, cast up by the changing tides of family life, as were all the other books at that little house in Monmouth Road.

It has been pointed out that turning him loose in a well-selected library is no mean education for a

healthy-minded boy, but the humble collection of dull and hard books which was the sole foraging-ground of this Boy was innocent of selection of any kind. Like Topsy, it had just "growed." It included such gems as *The Royal Path of Life*, *Gaskell's Compendium*, *Slicer on Baptism*, and *The Conversion of Hester Ann Rogers*. But they were not all so bad as



THE LITTLE HOUSE IN MONMOUTH ROAD

From a drawing by L. F. Grant

that. A few were that mysterious something called Literature, and their presence was more fortuitous than the gorgeous products of the book agent.

The Boy read them all. His appetite was like that of the infant tent-caterpillar, which starts from the twig end where it is born and devours every leaf it encounters in its journey to the trunk of the tree. And so we see the Boy, at the very beginning of what intends to be a lifetime of reading, sitting in

his little red chair, reading the book whose long title has just been recorded. Of course he does not remember the title with all the particularity with which it has been set down. *Line upon Line* was one of the books he salvaged when the little ill-selected library perished; and now, in a new dress by Stike-man, it has an honored place in his own library, which he flatters himself is less fortuitous and more eclectic than the one his infancy knew.

That is the first book he remembers reading to himself. It stands like a peak at the very beginning of memory. Particularly a certain evening when he began the "Story of Joseph." For the book was the narrative part of the Old Testament, emasculated, attenuated, and shorn of its splendid imagery to adapt it to the infant mind. And now after fifty years it seems rather patronizing in its tone and unduly insistent on a moral.

The author of *Line upon Line* conceived of God as a sort of glorified Tony Sarg, whose puppets got tangled in their strings and caused him no end of trouble and vexation. She had apparently one great advantage over Moses in that she knew exactly how God felt about it.

But this is the intolerance of fifty-four years. The Boy found it enthralling. It was not religious instruction to him. It was Romance, the Story, his

LINE UPON LINE;
OR
A SECOND SERIES
OF THE
EARLIEST RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
THE
INFANT MIND IS CAPABLE OF RECEIVING
WITH
VERSES ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SUBJECTS.

BY THE AUTHOR
OF THE "PEEP OF DAY."

Line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little.—ISA. 28:10.

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW YORK.

THE FIRST BOOK I REMEMBER READING

first Novel. There he sat in his little red chair, the book clutched in two tiny fists, the tears streaming down his cheeks at the incredible sufferings of young Joseph at the hands of his wicked elder brothers, hope springing at the unexpected soft-heartedness of Reuben, only to be dashed by the unswerving determination of Judah, until —

They threw him into the deep, dark pit; and there he lay hungry and thirsty and weary — without one drop of water to quench his thirst. How it must have grieved Joseph to think that he should not return to his dear father; and his father perhaps would think he was dead!

The wicked brothers cared not for his groans, but they sat down and began to eat their dinner.

God saw them from his throne in heaven, and was much displeased.

At this moment of greatest suspense the Boy's mother intervened. It was bedtime. No argument, no plea availed against the maternal decree, and the Boy wept afresh. The tears already flowing in sympathy with Joseph's hard lot were now augmented in his own behalf. Go to bed, and leave Joseph in the pit all night! Please, please, just one more chapter!

But Mother knew how exciting was the world of print to that book-hungry little mind. Already — the Boy seems to remember — grown-up heads were shaking and saying, "That boy reads too much."

And so he went to bed, in such a state of suspense that the memory of it has lasted fifty years. The only hope for Joseph seemed to lie in that last line, where the author intimated, without authority of Holy Writ, that God was displeased and might be counted on to do something about it. Not an entirely dependable hope, for experience with previous chapters had not given the Boy undimmed confidence in God as a *deus ex machina*.

The Boy did not know then and does n't know yet whether the happy ending is essential to the Divine Plot.

That was the Boy's first serial story, the first “continued in our next,” — a method of creating suspense which Edward Everett Hale imagined our magazine editors stole from Scheherazade, — and frequently since, sitting up to finish a book in spite of an adult bedtime imposed by the demands of the next day's work, the Boy has wished some high Olympian Power would forestall decision the way Mother snapped off the story of Joseph.

The tragedy of that first “to be continued” lingers in his memory, but the Boy does not remember reading the rest of the story, although he is sure he finished the book, for another recollection is that of standing up before his father and answering all the questions in fine type in the back of the book.

What did most people in the world pray to?
 Whom did God choose to be his servant and friend?
 How many grandchildren and great-grandchildren
 did God promise to give Abraham?
 What was it Abraham did when he was on the top
 of the hill?
 Who buried Sarah?

Some of the questions now seem as baffling as that
 famous query: Who dragged who how many times
 around the walls of what?

IV

THE ALPHABET

SOME time before the thrilling events just recorded, the Boy learned to read, but the details antedate recorded history and depend on tradition. He had a set of blocks. He remembers the blocks. They survived as building-material long after they had fulfilled their mission as steps to learning. They were oblong, about the proportions of a small brick, so that the two forms of a letter might be placed side by side — great *A* and little *a*, upper and lower case. Tradition says that before he could walk the Boy would select an easy morsel of learning and creep with it to his mother and call off its name, “*O-o*,” giving a different inflection to the majuscule to distinguish it from its inferior neighbor, the minuscule. *O* was easy: the capital and small letter were exactly alike. *H*, *Q*, and *G* were hard. The Boy followed an eclectic system. I wonder if even Mr. Goudy, who knows so much about the alphabet, learned his letters in the conventional sequence.

Thus the Boy acquired letters, and soon he recognized them not only on his blocks, which had become a sort of Rosetta Stone for him, but on the printed page, especially the large type in the adver-

tisements, and announced the fact to all within call with the insistence of an infant Archimedes yelling "Heureka!"

Could learning his letters be called the turning point in any boy's life, or is it just part of the common lot, like teething, or long pants, or marriage? At any rate the mystery of the alphabet exercised a profound influence on this Boy's destiny. For it gave him his job, which was printing, and his hobby, which was reading.

Both recreation and occupation were influenced by the fact that the Boy became deaf at an early age, which threw him sharply on his own resources for entertainment, and suggested also a trade that required the minimum of hearing. The alphabet was at once his plaything and his work-thing. He used to place those oblong blocks end to end, in a vain attempt to spell the words he knew, but the results were far from satisfying. *Dd-Oo-Gg* was no way to spell "dog," though it might conceivably be an economical way to spell two dogs. He cut out the large letters from the advertisements in the local weekly paper and pasted them together to form words, and he copied them with both pencil and paintbrush like an infant disciple of Geofroy Tory or Albrecht Dürer. And later — but not very much later — came the blissful day when with a

composing stick in his hand his fingers first felt the touch of the metal types: “the twenty-six lead soldiers which conquer the world.”

About this time there was another book, an earlier book than *Line upon Line*. He does not remember reading it, but he does remember the book, so he must have read it, — over and over, doubtless, — before and after the *Line upon Line* time. It was a *Child's History of England*, not Dickens's classic but a more elementary work, probably the earliest historical information the infant mind is capable of receiving. It was a big, thin, blue book, what he has since learned to call a quarto; and there were four gorgeous colored pictures on the left-hand page, and four squares of type on the page opposite, corresponding to the pictures. The type was that lovely big type in which children's books are printed — and which old age covets — and which was known at the time the Boy became a printer as Great Primer. The Boy lived to see the old picturesque names of type sizes, which have come down from the days of Caxton and Pynson, give way to the more efficient point-system, but he always wondered if the first book he studied was called a primer because of its type, or if the type was named for some early primary-school book.

This book then, with its chromo-lithographed

pictures and its Great Primer text, stood for profane history just as the condescending syllabus of the Bible stood for sacred history. The first picture showed that ancient Britons were no more civilized than the heathen returned missionaries talked so long about after Sunday School while the dinners of the entire Baptist persuasion grew cold. The text said they dyed their bodies with woad — the Britons, not the missionaries — and the Boy did n't know what "woad" was — and does n't yet — but he liked the funny word and remembered it. Then there was Boadicea with scythes on her chariot wheels; and Rufus lying face down with Wat Tyler's arrow sticking in him; and best of all, the scene in Canterbury market where the bishop examines the beautiful English girls with their long blond hair, and gets off his famous pun: "Are they Angles or angels?" Later information from other sources says that the bishop was Gregory, and the market place in Rome, and the girls probably boys, but the former is the way the Boy remembers it. The last picture showed an ermine-clad Palmerston kneeling before a very fat Victoria, while the text piously ejaculates: "who, thank God, still reigns!"

That book, pored over at an age when everything made a deep impression, has become for that Boy, English History. Nothing seen or learned since can

efface those colored pictures and that Great Primer text. Memory supplies them as illustrations or commentaries on all history read since. Hume, Clarendon, Green, Macaulay have been able to add nothing so lasting.

How he wishes he had kept that book, to compare it with memory, to straighten out some twisted impressions that still persist. Some Kansas cousins were suffering a plague of grasshoppers, which had eaten everything,—memory recalls someone saying, — and the Boy was persuaded to add to the bundle of clothing and other necessities being sent for their relief, some of his own books, which he did, but not without wonder at the voracity and literary taste of grasshoppers.

To this same far-off forgotten time before the Age of School belong two books now faded to a mere recollection of vague horror. Though he has searched for them both for many years, the Boy has never set eye on either since, to learn if the reality was as preposterous as his memory insists. One was *A Double Story*, by George MacDonald, a fairly well-known author, but this fantastic tale is found in no set of his works. Perhaps it was never made into a book. The Boy read it in *Wide Awake*, and was wide awake many a night for thinking of it. Those who have read *The Portent* and *Phantastes* can imagine the

BEYOND THE SNOW;
BEING A
HISTORY OF TRIM'S ADVENTURES
IN
NORDLICHTSCHEIN.

BY
P. Fiske Reed

Certes, a shadowe hath likenesse of the thing of which it is shadowed.
— CHAUCER.



CHICAGO:
PUBLISHED BY THE LAKESIDE PRESS.
1873.

THE FIRST THRILLER

flavor. The other memory is more vague, and accordingly more preposterous. For in this book an American boy was blown in a small boat across the Polar Sea and came to the land of perpetual night, where the people were all tall and thin and the color of potato sprouts from lack of sun. The King was very fond of stories, but when the teller told an untruth, the King said "whiz," and the court executioner took off his head. The King often said "whiz" while the hero was describing his native land, and the Boy trembled with apprehension, but the princess wound her long transparent arms around the young adventurer's neck, and the headsman did n't know where to strike.

These are only the Boy's impressions, — remember, it is more than fifty years, — and it is incredible that a tale so farcical as this seems to memory could have paralyzed him with terror as he remembers that it did.¹

¹Since this was first printed many correspondents have written that *A Double Story* was made into a book, and have sent me copies, bearing the imprint of Dodd, Mead & Company and the date, 1877. As for *Beyond the Snow*, which was the name of the other book I thought so obscure, Joseph N. Shensstone writes that it was written by Peter Fishe Reed and published by the Lakeside Press of Chicago, in 1873. And Bryant Venable gives a picture of the author who was a frequent visitor at his boyhood home. "Enter Peter Fishe Reed and his boy Joe. They came as all visitants come into the life of a country boy, out of a world scarcely less mysterious than Peter Fishe Reed's own country, *Beyond the Snow*, and into it they vanished again as silently as they came. Peter was an ancient Merlin of a man, fourscore years at least upon his white head. A thin, attenuated beard flowed unkempt over his narrow breast. But the weirdness of his pale blue eyes imparted to him a spectral appearance, entirely inconsistent with the mild and gentle intonation of his voice."

There are other jumbled memories, even more fragmentary, but nothing else stands out like the *Child's History* and *Line upon Line*.

At six years the Boy put away childish things, such as books printed in comfortable Great Primer, and climbing upon a chair, he helped himself to literature.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF

LITERATURE dwelt in a piece of furniture that stood against the wall of the sitting-room, known as The Bookcase, although it was a writing-desk and chest of drawers as well. The scientific name, I believe, is secretary. It was not an antique, though it may well have become one by now.

Here then, on three shelves, stood the ill-selected little library, the Boy's visible supply of reading for the first ten years of his existence — mostly *The Complete Works of*, in one volume; and that means two columns of small type to the page, with usually a "Life" in even smaller type, and a steel portrait as frontispiece. Their uninviting format enhanced their natural dullness, and if there is anything in Freud, was perhaps the reason why the Boy developed later a passion for beautifully printed books — the result of what might be called a typographical inhibition.

The cornerstone of this structure was *Johnson's Cyclopedia*, a puzzling word that surely somehow must have some connection with the three-wheeled vehicle the Boy rode, which he called his velocipede. Johnson was a formula, a rhythmic chant,

that went something like this, "A-to-Cam, Cam-to-Eli, Eli-to-Gon, Gon-to-Lab," and so on, rendered in chorus by the full strength of the company, like "Onery, Twoery, Ickery Ann." The company sat, when thus engaged, on the lowest step of the stairs which fled steeply up from the sitting-room, leaving one step extending into the room, as if the door had been shut too quickly for it to get out. It just held five, assorted ages.

When later Johnson was found to be a treasure house of raw material for school "essays," he was always spoken of as "Old Gon-to-Lab."

Standing shoulder to shoulder with the cyclopædia were some old bound volumes of magazines: *Ballou's*, *Peterson's*, *Godey's Lady's Book* (is one lady enough?), *Harper's*, and the *Atlantic*. *Ballou's* and *Peterson's* contained fearful stuff the Boy was forbidden to read, — such as "The Ghost of Perley Hall," — but did read notwithstanding and was scared stiff. In the *Atlantic* he read for the first time "The Man Without a Country"; and in that magazine — or was it *Harper's*? — a little-known tale by the same author: "The Yellow Dog," in which it was imagined that Joseph — that Joseph-complex again — tried to escape from the merchants to whom his brothers sold him, but was discovered through the barking of a yellow dog, and by

this chance the world was saved from starvation.

In the back of one of the *Harpers*, in the Editor's Drawer, was a review of a little-known work of George Borrow. It seemed that there was a collection of Oriental tales known as *The Hodja*, or Borrow pretended there was and translated it under the title of *The Turkish Jester*. The book was printed at Ipswich in a thin paper-covered volume and has since become what is known as a collector's item. The reviewer had been liberal in quotations — all that were fit to print, probably — and the anecdotes became part of the Boy's stock in trade. When in the course of time he developed into a writer of advertising, he drew upon his memory and utilized many of those droll stories as points to hang advertising morals on.¹

There was one delightful adventure in which the Hodja accepts an invitation to dine with a great personage, and hurries off in his everyday tunic. He is received with little respect by the servants and given a poor seat far down the table. He rushes home, puts on his gorgeous Sunday tunic, and returns to be welcomed with great ceremony and seated at the host's right hand. Whereupon he

¹ I have since learned that Borrow's *Turkish Jester* was not the one from which the Editor's Drawer made such copious extracts. It was in 1876 that the Drawer's translation appeared, and Borrow's book was not published until 1884. Borrow calls him the Cogia, instead of the Hodja, suggesting that the stories were handed down orally, and his versions are weaker and less snappy than those I read in the old *Harper's*.



The Turkish Fester;
OR,
The Pleasantries
OF
Qogia Nazr Eddin Effendi.

Translated from the Turkish

BY
George Borrow.

Ipswich :
W. WEBBER, HIGH STREET.
1884.



A SOURCE BOOK OF ADVERTISING MATERIAL

begins to ladle the food into the sleeves of his tunic.

"Why do you do that?" asks the astonished host.

"Because it is my tunic, and not I, which is the welcome guest."

Whiston's *Josephus* occasioned wonder as to what a josephus was. Plutarch's *Lives of Illustrious Men* suggested pictures, but there were none. Nevertheless the book proved a find, and much of it, especially the short, pithy, "laconic" anecdotes of the Lacedæmonians, became excellent straw for later advertising bricks. Lycurgus certainly had the slogan habit.

Farrar's *Life of Christ* was a most readable book in nice large type, with a raft of interesting footnotes, which described such delectable things as the Greek acrostic whose initials spelled the word "fish," the sacred symbol of the early Christians, which indicated their secret meeting-places. The Boy had a scrapbook mind, and collected such fragments and used them when the time came.

Fables of Infidelity, in spite of its title, was disappointing stuff, all about the Rev. Mr. — of S — who narrated incidents about Mrs. C — and Henry R —. This device for disguising people never found favor with the Boy. Harper's Drawer also had the habit. But the very name of this book was misleading. He knew what fables



AT THE OTHER END OF FIFTY YEARS

were. Had n't he Æsop's with Tenniel's pictures? Æsop was also a prolific source-book for advertising matter. The Boy in the course of time based at least a hundred pieces of copy on those ingenious tales, all of which he knew by heart.

A large fat book, bound in red cloth with gilt flourishes printed all over it, was *The Works of Miss Mitford*, which contained not only *Our Village* but seven other books. It must have proved barren to ten years of age, for no memory comes except that of its familiar floreated physiognomy.

Biblical Reasons Why, on the contrary, is a vivid recollection. It belonged evidently to the *Line upon Line* school and consisted entirely of questions and answers in the Socratic manner. Some of the questions were posers, but the book knew neither doubt nor hesitation.

Why does the Bible commence with the words:
"In the beginning"?

Why is the formation of Eve out of the rib of Adam
to be taken literally?

Why was Jonah swallowed by a great fish?

The charm of this book lay in its quaint woodcuts; the baker and butler of Pharaoh, the Ark of the Covenant, Aaron in his High Priest suit, all the Apostles with their insignia, and so on. This remarkable work has disappeared from the world, which is a great pity, as it knew the answers to

questions that have puzzled learned archbishops.

Side by side on this shelf stood four fat poets, uniformly dressed in law calf with black-and-red labels, looking like the set of Illinois statutes in Father's office — *Burns*, *Byron*, *Moore*, and *Shakespeare*, *The Complete Works of*. As if it were not enough that these four poets should be linked together, there was a game of authors in which the same four formed a “book.” Now nothing can sever them in that Boy's memory.

No edition, not even the First Folio, seems so indubitably Shakespeare as that paunchy calf-clad book with the steel engraving of Miranda for frontispiece. He read *The Tempest* first of all the plays, of course, because *The Tempest* came first. Some Puritan inheritance led him to feel that a book should be begun at the beginning and read through.

It is more than likely that Byron registered more strongly than any of the quartette in those early years, because of the notes. There was a dado of them on every page, in blinding type, nearly all biographical. The unforgettable name of John Cam Hobhouse was spread all over them. The Boy liked names and he liked biography, and by a perverse association of ideas he insisted on giving the limp that should have been Byron's to his friend—just because of that strange name.

The inspiration of all the four poets was at first biographical. The Boy was interested in how they did it rather than in what they did; in the things that made them poets rather than in their poetry. He was and probably is more of a craftsman than an artist. He did read ultimately all the "works" as well as the "lives" — as he read everything in print that came his way — but a definite taste for biography was instilled by the meagre pages that prefaced each book, fed and nourished by the fat notes in the Byron, with their copious extracts from letters. Poetry came to him a little later, but the love for poetry is rather extrinsic — as an art rather than a message. Words and rhythm charmed him. He fell easily under the spell of Tennyson — a purchase of his own, and another instance of a book read from the beginning, so that "Airy fairy Lillian" and "Where Claribel low lieth" obtrude in the memory because they came first in the book.

VI

A SMALL BOY'S READING

WHEN the Boy was born there were no comets seen, but a best-seller shone upon his birth, namely *St. Elmo*, that immortal work of Augusta J. Evans, and from it he had one of his names, bestowed at the request of sentimental Aunt Celia, the same Aunt Celia who twenty years before gave Uncle Mahlon the copy of *Line upon Line* which became the Boy's stepping-stone to books. The name is not uncommon among those whose birth-year is in the neighborhood of 1868, and strange to say, nearly all became advertising men. E. St. Elmo Lewis says he can account for fourteen. *St. Elmo* stood on the top shelf, along with *Norine's Revenge*, by May Agnes Fleming, *The English Orphans*, by Mary J. Holmes, *A Day of Fate*, by E. P. Roe, *Brave Old Salt*, by Oliver Optic, and *The Lamplighter*, by Maria S. Cummings, which, with Jane Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*, represented fiction. *St. Elmo* had this effect, that its erudite and recondite allusions stimulated the Boy's curiosity, and for several years afterward he made a game of the research necessary to find out what the author was talking about. He admired it prodigiously, and resolved to write like that, and did in fact pro-

duce a high school oration that sent his teacher into hysterics.

Does anybody know this book to-day? How would these remarks sound beside, say, a quotation from *Babbitt*?

"Mr. Murray, if you insist upon your bitter Ösher simile, why shut your eyes to the palpable analogy suggested? Naturalists assert that the Solanum, or apple of Sodom, contains in its normal state neither dust nor ashes, unless it is punctured by an insect, the Tenthredo, which converts the whole of the inside into dust, leaving nothing but the rind entire, without any loss of color. Human life is as fair and tempting as the fruit of 'Ain Jidy', till stung or poisoned by the Tenthredo of sin."

This by a girl of seventeen; but they all talked like that, and were greatly admired by a boy of nine, who earnestly hoped that along with the name he would acquire both the erudition and the bitter cynical nature of the hero.

On the top shelf was a row of shabby volumes bound in black cloth that time had frayed to a dusty gray, among which were *Hudibras*, and *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts* of the Rev. Edward Young, D.D. *Hudibras* had an exciting frontispiece showing a buxom and determined lady seated on a man lying on the ground, while the legend beneath in script type added to the excitement with something like this: —

"I told thee, villain, what could come
Of all thy base vapping scum."

Perhaps that was n't the way it went, but that is what the Boy remembers. He found it harder to understand even than *St. Elmo*, and there seemed to be no way to find out what it was all about. He did not care for it much and was confirmed later by Pepys, who lived in those times but could not, as he confessed, see where the wit came in. But strange to say, the melancholy music of *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts* appealed to him so strongly that he began to commit it to memory and made considerable progress, and can repeat much of it still.

In these middle years came the first bitter awakening to what is known as worldly wisdom. There was a serial story running in the fourth volume of *St. Nicholas*, by J. T. Trowbridge, entitled “His Own Master,” and the Boy and his father were both reading it. The story told how Jacob, having sold the few belongings left after the death of his mother, set out for the big city — in this instance, Cincinnati — with his whole fortune, eighty-five dollars and forty-nine cents, in his pocket. On the Ohio River steamboat he became acquainted with Professor Alphonse Pinkey, who, when he learned that the Boy had this money with him, explained how risky it was to carry so much without a safety wallet. He, Alphonse, fortunately had such a wallet and kindly offered to carry Jacob's money for

him, which offer Jacob gratefully accepted. The installment ended on this incident, — life was just one serial after another, — and the Boy still remembers with what unbelieving amazement he heard his father's comment: "That's the last he will ever see of his money."

But sure enough, in the next number the obliging Professor disappeared, leaving the Boy in something the same state of mind as Jacob — but with a tremendously increased respect for his father's penetration and shrewdness.

But of all the books of that time the one that stands out most clearly in memory after forty-five years is Milton. It was a small, chunky, bright-red book, but it was complete — *The Works of Milton*, with the inevitable Life and portrait. The mental picture of it is a physical one, like the Shakespeare. Each page was surrounded by an oval wreath in which the blank verse made a neat panel. That little red volume is Milton personified.

As with every book, the Boy studied it from all angles, and wondered why, for instance, each book of *Paradise Lost* began with an "argument." To him the word meant only one thing. And the titles of the "Poems on Several Occasions," — "At a Solemn Music," "On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough," "On the University Carrier,"

“To Mr. H. Lawes on His Airs” — were n’t those funny things for a great poet to write about? He did appreciate, however, the sharp, quick change in the metre of the “Ode on the Nativity.” It made his heart beat faster. He puzzled a long time over “Samson Agonistes.” Was that the Samson he knew, the Samson of the *Line upon Line*? And was Agonistes his last name? It sometimes seemed as if one must have read everything before he could read anything.

As with Young’s *Night Thoughts*, the stately music of Milton’s lines appealed, and the Boy set himself to commit it to memory. He had not then learned of the young Macaulay’s precocious feat, and he never got by heart more than the first Book, but the good he got from it was beyond calculation. Milton was undoubtedly the book that influenced him most. From it he acquired vocabulary and images, a feeling for words, for their deeper meanings, their power of suggestion, which was invaluable to him later in earning his living. Unlike the man who never ate strawberries for fear it would vitiate his taste for prunes, he has never been able to get Milton out of his system sufficiently to appreciate, say, “The Waste Land.” One day the teacher asked if anyone in the class had ever read *Paradise Lost*. Flushed with the pride of an adventurer in un-

known reaches of literature, he raised his hand, and earned — and deserved — the scorn of every other boy in the class.

In the back of the little book was *Paradise Regained and Other Poems*, including “L’Allegro,” “Il Penseroso,” and “Lycidas.” The impress of the latter was deepened in the following way. The local W. C. T. U., of which Mary Allen West was an active promoter, offered a prize of five dollars to the schoolboy who should write the best essay on the physical effects of alcoholics. The Boy won it. No doubt that trenchant paper helped to mould the public opinion that brought about the Prohibition landslide. But anyway with the money he bought a book, his first literary purchase: a book by John Ruskin, containing in one volume *Sesame and Lilies*, *A Crown of Wild Olives*, *The Queen of the Air*, and *Ethics of the Dust*. Here was the first acquaintance with criticism. All of them affected him profoundly. And in particular he found in the lecture “Of Kings’ Treasuries” a new way of reading poetry that sent him back to “Lycidas,” to commit to memory the “blind mouth” passage, greatly excited at two such mighty minds — Milton who put so much into a passage, and Ruskin who got it all out.

Don’t smile! He was serious. These things all came at the very beginning and bent his mind the

way it has grown. Out of that old Ruskin he got real help in his unconscious education that was shaping him for the work he was eventually to do.

Two more links added themselves to what might be called the Milton era. In the school library was Addison, which he was allowed to borrow. What he remembers is the analysis of *Paradise Lost*, which he read from the unassailable position of familiarity with the work discussed: a necessary preliminary to the enjoyment of any literary criticism, he thinks.

Also, about this time deafness began to interfere more and more with life, and to say with emphasis to the Boy that books must be increasingly his chief resource. Among the poems in the back of the *Milton* was one that he appreciated as his own, learning it by heart, and drawing from it a sort of comfort, all out of proportion to the merits of the case. The poem, of course, was the sonnet “On His Blindness.”

VII

AT THE CENTRAL PRIMARY

THE Central Primary was a wooden building that had once been the Colored Baptist church. The Boy never knew why it had changed its estate. Either the colored Baptists had prospered and builded a more sumptuous tabernacle or the mortgage had been foreclosed and deprived them of any. But for as long as he could remember the big building beside the public square had been the portal to education, where he would have to go when he was six years old. He had been taken once to visit the school, arrayed in absurdly short short-pants, the pocket-flaps of which were a vain show and led nowhere. This so pleased the boys when they discovered it that they celebrated the fact by filling the pseudo-pockets with stubs of slate pencils which fell through on the Boy's shoes. But he did not mind. He gathered that it was part of the ceremony of School, and looked eagerly forward to the day when he would don the *toga virilis*.

And sure enough, one bright September morn, having attained the legal age, he set out for the desecrated church, in high hopes and a kind of fever of anticipation, because no one in that school,

teacher or pupil, realized how very much he already knew, and they were in for a big surprise. He could read and spell and write — or at least “print” — and so, although no one was aware of it, he was going to school primarily to display the stores of knowledge already accumulated. This thought filled the inside of him with a warm glow of expectation, which he has felt sometimes since, and which the hand of Fate has damped and extinguished as effectually as it did in this earliest instance he remembers.

Little had been done to the church to fit it for a schoolhouse. The pews had been taken out and replaced with short benches, divided by broad arms into two seats, like those in the help-yourself lunch rooms. The old gallery where the choir used to sit was still in place, and the dark stairway that led to it was used now only as an oubliette for the confinement of the more dangerous lawbreakers among the pupils. The bell that formerly rang only on Sundays now enlarged its labors to a five-day week, sounding at eight, eight-thirty, and at eight forty-five; again at ten-thirty for recess, and at the end, fifteen minutes later. The morning session ended at twelve without bell, book, or candle. Contrary to the laws of physics, less energy was required to stop a session than to set it in motion. After dinner the bell rang

at one and one-thirty, and — for all whose record was spotless — the day ended at half past three. Others stayed after school, the incident ceremony being called “taking your name.” Thus was enacted each afternoon a miniature replica of the Day of Judgment, so graphically described in the *Book of Revelation*, when the heavens were rolled up as a scroll.

On the rostrum stood, this first morning, a teacher with curls who plays the part of Fate in the Boy’s tragedy. Her name was Nora McClay. Assigned to one of the seats with broad arms, the Boy found beneath the arm a small cubby-hole in which were to be kept what the social economists call the implements of production.

The teacher ordained and authorized the purchase of these implements: a slate, a slate pencil, and a primer. The slate which the Boy’s parents could afford was the proletarian one, a square of thin black stone framed in wood, the frame bound with a strip of red flannel by means of what looked like a black shoestring, not so much for ornament as to enable it to live up to its name of Victor Noiseless. Attached to the slate by a string was a small sponge. Slate pencils were two kinds, soapstone, which were soft and never sharp; and regular slate, which had a fine point and sometimes came covered for half their

length with paper gay with the stars-and-stripes.

There was also a more costly and aristocratic slate, called a book-slate, with four to eight leaves of black silica, which could be written on with a slate pencil and rubbed out. Many of the wealthier pupils had this Persian apparatus, which gave the Boy some heartburnings and early introduced class distinctions into his life.

But it was the primer which dashed the Boy's hopes and dreams of triumph, and turned them to ashes in his mouth. It was a small, thin, blue book, and its official name was *McGuffey's Eclectic Primer*. To his horror and dismay he discovered, on looking it over the first evening, that it was written in an unknown alphabet. All, all were gone, the old familiar faces. Here and there was a recognizable letter, but every word contained some uncouth, obscene character that rendered it unintelligible. This book was one of the educational fads of that time, an attempt to teach children to read phonetically. It had been prescribed by the Board of Education, and it had to be taught, even to those who were so unfortunate as to have already learned to read before coming to school. An alphabet had been designed with diabolical ingenuity which was supposed to represent the sound of the spoken letter. *Th* as a diphthong was a character something like the

Anglo-Saxon symbol for the same sound — though of course the Boy did not know that. *C* soft had a tiny *s* cunningly concealed in its insides, while *C* hard was similarly equipped with a *k*. Soft *G* had a small *j* depending from its lower lip. *Wh* as in “who” and “when” was a monogram of the two letters, and *ai*, *ow*, and *ou* were disfigured like Siamese twins, with ignominious ligatures and bands that deformed them in the Boy’s eyes like monstrous growths on human beings. Not only was his dear and familiar alphabet made into a strange and grotesque thing, but this Cubist alphabet was expanded to include as many symbols as Mr. McGuffey supposed there were sounds in the English language. More than that, the so-called silent letters were printed in light-faced type, utterly ruining the physiognomy of the word. There were other complexities and vexations which the Boy has now forgotten. He has not set eyes on that accursed book for forty-eight years.

Nor did spelling escape the hands of the vandals. The Boy rather fancied himself as a speller. To him the printed word was a picture. It did not look right if a single letter was altered or missing. In the vision of his coming triumph spelling had loomed large. But the new learning did not include spelling. One did not spell; one “sounded.” The curly-

LESSON XLVIII.



cart	Hugh
hurt	Giles
said	spade
lawn	round

One day Hugh and Giles went out to play near the big tree on the lawn.

They had an old spade with them, and they said they would call it their cart.

Giles got on the spade, and Hugh drew it all round the lawn. Giles then said:

Now, Hugh, it is your turn to ride. Come, get on.

Hugh got on, but Giles ran

A PAGE FROM THE COPY OF "MCGUFFEY'S ECLECTIC PRIMER," WHICH THE BOY STUDIED

"His dear and familiar alphabet was made into a grotesque thing"

haired teacher commanded, "Sound *dog*," and the intelligentsia went through something like this: "Duh-awe-guh." When you spelled the word in this new fashion you were supposed to have pronounced it, like a movie film of the word run very slowly.

The Boy could have wept, and in fact did weep. Not only were his dearly-bought accomplishments rendered of no avail, but the alphabet, instead of being one of the verities acquired for a lifetime, was a transient and mutable thing. How many alphabets was one supposed to learn to keep up with this mysterious something called reading? Was nothing permanent — not even *A B C*? The Boy felt, as so many of us have since the war, that a lifetime of laboriously acquired experience was suddenly rendered useless by a new era.

Years afterward, in the course of his work as an advertising man, the Boy came across an old metal-worker who was strongly prejudiced against the tar-and-composition roofs that were then beginning to be advertised. "I don't hold with these new-fangled roofings," he averred. "I believe in covering roofs with tin, as God intended they should be." To the Boy the alphabet as he had learned it had the inviolable character of roofs.

That little book had other vagaries. The world

that it revealed was as unfamiliar as its typography. On the very first page, after the new characters began to have a meaning to the Boy, he read: —

Is it an ox?
It is an ox.
Is it my ox?
It is my ox.
Go on, ox, do go on.

At the top of this page was the picture of an animal that even cursory inspection showed was a cow. True, the boy had heard of oxen. They had them in the Bible. But he had never seen one, and certainly never owned one. To him an ox was as strange as the blood-sweating behemoth. The only part of this lesson that roused enthusiasm was the last line.

It was like that all through the book. There was a man with a cart, a high cart with two huge wheels, drawn by a horse which wore a great saddle on its back. The man had on some sort of basque. But everyday farmers drove past the house where the Boy lived, riding in green lumber-wagons drawn by two horses, and they wore coats like the Boy's father and had their pants tucked in their boots. The man with the cart was no more related to everyday life than the circus clown with the calico pony. The boys in this book bore such names as Hugh and Miles, and they were fond of saying “Ah” when they began to speak, which it will be remembered

was the favorite expletive of Rollo's friend Jonas. In the Boy's circle there were an Art and a Sanny, but Arthur and Alexander were barred from primers by their length, and Art and Sanny by their utterly improper colloquialism. And "Ah" was a shibboleth.

By a triumph of ingenuity that should earn it a place in Miss Wells's *Whimsical Anthology*, McGuffey's primer was written entirely in words of one syllable. By consulting Codex A *supra* it will be seen that the naïve dialogue about the ox is narrated not only with words of one syllable but with syllables of two letters. As the book progresses the words get longer and harder, without abandoning the monosyllabic form, until they attain such difficult lengths as "bough" and "straight" and "through." The Boy knew many words of two syllables, and even three, that were easier than these, but McGuffey was joined to his idols. The last lesson told of a rose, a blush rose, which of course had its monitory attendant thorn. The word "thorn" in the bastard text of McGuffey was a weird vocable. Decision wavered for a time as to whether it was a thorn or a throne the rose had. In the Boy's life, roses were almost as rare as oxen.

VIII

THE BOOK AND THE SLATE

DESPITE heartburnings, the orthoëpic alphabet did not detain him long. He was, as the actors say, a quick study. Under the tutelage of the teacher with the ringlets, whose Scotch name suggested affinity at least with the clan McGuffey, the Boy learned the new text and then read the thin blue book through from ox to thorn. Having thus again demonstrated his superiority and won back a portion of the self-esteem that had been dashed by the rejection of his home-grown A B C's, he was disposed to rest on his laurels, and wait for official recognition of his prowess. But his only reward was to sit with his hands folded and wait until the rest of the class was ready to recite. And while he waited, his thoughts, with some retrospective assistance, ran about like this: School was a delusion and a snare. Instead of being a place where education was pursued with delight, where one went from triumph to triumph amid the plaudits of the multitude, where one continued the adventure of learning with growing excitement and pleasure, it was really a dull place where character was formed by tribulation and disappointment. Its purpose appeared to be discipline

rather than education. The important thing was to obey the rules. Falling ahead seemed as reprehensible as falling behind. The Shakespearian tradition of the schoolboy creeping like a snail unwillingly to school was sedulously upheld.

There is reason to believe that if one could have read the minds of the adult world at that period some such conception would have been found in them. They would have agreed that the Boy's arraignment was a true bill. They would have had grave doubts about any school that its victims found pleasant. Education was a painful process, and its painfulness was a part of the education. Not one of those grown-ups, teacher, superintendent, board of education, or parents, could foresee the time which now is, when school is the supreme adventure of childhood, and when, as I am credibly informed, children resort to the same subterfuges to avoid being kept home from school as they once practised to escape going. The story of Tom Sawyer's hypothetical toothache must seem as legendary to the modern child as the account of William Tell and the apple to a walking delegate.

The Slate served no better than the Book, but for the opposite reason. Its chief function was to aid in acquiring a knowledge of a mystery called "Numbers," which bore no relation to the fourth book of

Moses, but was merely a euphemism for that hard word, “Arithmetic.” Numbers consisted of a long series of tables, which if done neatly made an orderly arrangement on the slate, which was very gratifying. But neatness was not enough. Correctness was also a desideratum. So the pleasure of creating an artistic format was marred by the necessity of having the answers right. There was also the matter of language. The tables must be read according to formula. “One plus one equals two. One minus one equals ought. One times one equals one. One divided by one equals one.” Each of these permutations was carried to twelve, though why twelve instead of ten, which seems the logical stopping-place, the Boy never learned. The outposts of the mathematical world, at least in the Central Primary, were established at the twelfth milestone.

After the tables came “examples.” Examples were such bits of anecdote as: “If a man can saw twelve cords of wood in seven days, how much wood can he saw in one day?” The issue was clouded for the Boy by a vision of Bud Gash, who sometimes sawed the paternal wood, and who could not possibly have sawed twelve cords in seven days. The example best remembered of all was the one which inquired: “If a stick and a half of candy costs

a cent and a half a stick, how much will one stick cost?" which was n't a school example at all, but a catch propounded by some jocose elder outside jurisdiction. They did not have such amusing diversions at school.

"Numbers" was a greater trial than even Mr. McGuffey's misbegotten alphabet. The Boy, as the phrase goes, had no head for figures. The phrase is all wrong, however. He had a head for figures. He delighted to make them. He liked to carry the tail of the seven below the line, and close up the four at the top the way it was done in print. What he hated was to figure with figures — add, subtract, multiply. He had, I fear, a finite mind. A long column to be added gave him a feeling of faintness, almost nausea, like that with which later he tried to grasp the idea of time and space. He did not at that early hour have the consolation of Holmes's wise conclusion, who felt less chagrin at his lack of mathematical proficiency when he learned that machines could add and multiply.

In the course of time the Boy's hearing failed, and he became deafer and deafer, but he never, never became an adder.

The slate was the innocent instrument of his greatest triumph and greatest humiliation. One day the teacher instructed the class to copy its lesson

upon its respective slates. The lesson for the day concerned the doings — or perhaps the disposition — of a certain dog bearing the unorthodox name of Tray, a name not bestowed on dogs outside of primers. What the word “copy” meant to the Boy, memory fails to register, but what he did was this: He construed it literally and reproduced the page with the fidelity of a Chinaman duplicating a patched coat. Perhaps he knew that he was exceeding expectations, or perhaps he really thought that the teacher wanted a holographic facsimile. There were so many puzzling things about the practices of school. At any rate, he made that page with the folio number at the upper right-hand corner; the running head in *Italic caps*, a crinkly rule under it; then a picture of the kennel, with Tray lying half in and half out; on either side a neat column of words to spell, and underneath “Lesson VII,” the title, and the chaste and sober narrative of some incident in Tray’s history. With a carefully sharpened slate pencil he reproduced the McGuffey characters, the silent letters in lighter line, and when the call came for results, flushed and excited, he laid his work before the teacher, who told him to take it home and show it to his father and mother. It was all of a piece with the baffled and confused state of mind that school produced in him that he went without

being clear whether it was reward or punishment.

He trotted along as fast as his legs could carry him, holding the slate at arm's length so as not to smudge it, now swelling with pride as he viewed his masterpiece, and now overcome by misgivings that he had again been too enterprising for a conservative age. The event, as it appears to recollection, was all to the good. Mother admired and praised, and stood the slate carefully on the shelf beside the clock to await father's home-coming. What a pity that such an inspiration should have been confided to so perishable a palimpsest as the slate, washed off next day with a sponge and almost as soon from the memory of the high Olympians. But the Boy, like Tray, had had his day.

And now comes his degradation. The G.A.R. parade passed the schoolhouse exactly at recess-time, and the Boy followed the band until it was too late to return before the last bell, and then followed it all the way. His confederates were a colored boy whose father was a barber, and a Jewish boy whose father was a tobacconist. The word "tobacconist" is used intentionally, for the emporium of Stremmel & Myers was no ordinary cigar store. It had what the Boy would have called an Old World air, if he had ever heard of such a thing, with its wooden pails of fine-cut displayed in rows

along the counter, and in the window a log cabin most ingeniously built with cigars. It was one of the show places on Main Street, like the model steamship in the window of the emigrant ticket agency, and was religiously visited on the Sunday afternoons when one was allowed to go downtown and look in the windows.

There was something especially heinous in walking out of the school yard at recess and not coming back. It was what is now known to a militaristic generation as being A.W.O.L. Authority was evidently hard put to find a punishment to fit the crime. The penalty imposed was to remain after school one hour each day until one had written “I ran away” one thousand times on one’s slate, a form of punishment reminiscent of mediæval religious Orders. Memory insists that the medium used was writing, and not “printing,” but the cursive hand of that age was not a facile medium, and the days seemed to stretch ahead without end. One of the trio, probably the tobacconist’s heir, announced that he was going to devote his period of penal servitude to improving his penmanship, but this virtuous resolve did not apparently soften the heart of Authority. The Boy made no propitiatory libations, but set himself doggedly to execute his task, turning in his tale each day to be counted and credited before he

could go home. The twenty years Monte Cristo spent in the Château d'If were as a short winter's day beside the time it took the Boy to complete his sentence — or more accurately, sentences. But it must have been finished, because all things come to an end in time, even the school year.

The following year the Boy was promoted. The B class became the A class, and moved across the room and sat in the seats of the mighty. Not all, however. There was a little classmate whose brain was so slow that one copy of a book was not enough to teach her its contents. She had been compelled to remain behind in the B class and repeat her progress through *McGuffey's Primer*. Swollen with pride at his own recent advancement, the Boy, with his new *Monroe's First Reader* under his arm, one day taunted the backward one: "Oh Abbie, you in that old Primer yet?" And Abbie, true to type, utterly oblivious of the aspersion that had been cast upon her, proudly displayed a brand new copy of the Primer, and replied, "No, I got a new one."

As far as interest goes, Monroe had little on McGuffey. The narratives concerned the adventures of two colorless individuals named John and Kate, who led uninspired lives. They too seemed to live in a world that existed only in schoolbooks. At one place you read that they caught prawns in the pools

by the sea. The Boy was not ignorant of the fauna of western Illinois. He had caught bull-cats in Spoon River, and drowned out gophers on the prairies around the town, but the only prawn he had ever heard of was the species Monroe. He had a faint idea that they were something you played chess with. He did not play chess, but he played with the chessmen, and the chessmen had little chess boys, which were of course the black ones, and chess girls, which were white, and the grown-up world called them prawns. But finding them in pools seemed to obtain only in schoolbooks.

Nevertheless the *First Reader* had one quality that atoned for all shortcomings, and makes it stand out in memory as a glorious thing, for it was printed with the orthodox alphabet the Boy had learned from his building blocks, and the McGuffey orthoëpic characters passed from memory like a fevered dream. Never again did they darken his mental door. The original alphabet, the one he learned first, was now sufficient for all the reading he would ever do. That year of McGuffey was just so much lost out of his life, and when in time he tackled Greek, and later Anglo-Saxon, the old feeling came back; he remembered that he had learned harder things in his youth. It was just another form of McGuffeyism.

IX

THE MYSTERY OF MAPS

No sooner had reading become fairly easy and scarcely a study at all, than he discovered that it was not really an end, but a means to an end. By the exercise of it one learned other things.

One of the other things was geography. Geography was a large, thin, flat book, the largest of the schoolbooks, and its unstandard size made it difficult to carry in conjunction with the other books. It was garnished with a blue-checked-gingham slip-cover, fashioned by mother to protect it unspotted from the world, in the vain hope that it might descend to successive members of one large family; but when at the end of the course the cover was removed, the contrast between the outside and the inside of the book was startling. It was not what the old-book dealers describe as good second-hand condition.

The outstanding wonder of geography was maps. The text had little to offer so stimulating to the imagination. They gave the Boy a new field for speculation, and added greatly to the store of mental resources out of which he fashioned amusements and devices for mitigating the shortcomings of deafness.

Standing first in the book was a map of the world stretched out on an oblong rectangle, wherein Greenland was apparently the largest body of land. The fine type down in the corner said it was “The World on Mercator’s Projection,” but fine type in schoolbooks was always addressed to teachers and other grown-ups. Meanwhile here was Mercator’s world, flat as a table and square at the corners. The use of globes was not taught at the Central Primary. Indeed, the school did not possess one. The geography contradicted Mercator and insisted that the world was round. There was also other evidence. A scrap of rhyme lingered in the Boy’s memory from pre-school days, which exclaimed: —

The world is round, I do declare,
And hung on nothing in the air.

Nevertheless the book seemed admirably adapted to the needs of that complaisant teacher who agreed to teach it round or flat as the School Board demanded.

The Boy’s problem was to establish a working relation between himself and the universe, — and after fifty years still a problem, — to find his *pou sto*: a difficult job when that universe did not come apparently any closer to him than the outlines of the State of Illinois. The point where he stood was for him the centre of the world, while from Mercator the geography advanced toward him by degrees:

first, hemispheres, then continents, then countries, the United States, his own State — but no further. It was an elementary book, which did not get down to such details as where one lived. It was elementary at the wrong end. For surely the elementary fact of existence was that one lived in Galesburg, Knox County, Illinois. Even that was a generalization. One lived in a little white house in Monmouth Road. And long before he heard the word “geography” the Boy had begun his own map, from his centre and reaching outward vaguely toward the universe.

First, there came the Yard, — obviously a much bigger place than the world as Mercator made it, and much fuller of interesting things, — bounded on one side by a picket fence with a gate, on the flat-topped posts of which the Boy sat and regarded the rest of the world; and then the three hard maples, every limb of which he knew like the fingers of his hand, the two apple trees, the big one and the little one, the sweetbrier rose at the corner of the house, and the stonecrop — always called “butter-and-eggs” — growing beside the bricks of the foundation as far as the cellar door. At the back, a broad highway ran straight through a Sherwood Forest of currant bushes to an open grass-plot in the far corner, where stood the swing. A magnificent estate,

truly, covering nearly an eighth of an acre. The Boy knew every landmark and could to-day draw a fairly accurate topographical map of the first bit of the earth's surface with which he became acquainted.

Outside the Yard one went two ways: down to the Bridge, and up to the Corner. Obviously there was only one bridge and one corner. At the Corner one looked down five streets, because of the flatiron that had been taken out of one block. The most interesting street to look down was Academy Street, where one could see Noah's Ark standing boldly, with its great weathered gable, resting on the street. It was exactly the shape of the toy one, but not so brightly colored. He fancied the paint must have been washed off by the long rain. He was still, it should be understood, in the Golden Age of legend. Long before geography he learned that Noah's Ark was really an incredibly overgrown hay-barn, a Somebody's Folly, built no doubt to hold food for the lean kine during seven years of famine.

At the Corner was the Octagon House. It belonged to Mr. Dormer. Some houses had windows named after him, but Mr. Dormer's house had no dormer window. Its mysterious shape gave one a thrill. One speculated as to the shapes of the rooms

inside. They must have been laid out the way mother cut the pie. But the Boy never went inside.

Later he went as far as the Next Corner. After that came Hale's Corner, where one turned and went diagonally through the Park. For this was the Roman Road. It led Down Town. Its landmarks were far older and better established than anything in the geography. You came out of the Park into Broad Street, where the Central Primary stood, and just ahead was the Public Square. In the centre of the square stood the Liberty Pole. It was the *Umbilicus*.

On one side of the square was E. F. Thomas Corner. It was the first yearnings of a department store. It seemed to confirm the Boy's terminology — that is, if it was right to assume that Mr. Thomas had a corner. Sign-painters then as now had no apostrophes in their kits. On the other hand, he might be Mr. Corner.

This then was the known world which the Boy attempted to join up with a green map in the book called Illinois. And in the course of time I suppose he did join it up, with the aid of advanced geography which went as far as counties, with the further help of a map of Knox County which hung in father's office, with the tiers of townships running across it and pictures of the courthouse, the jail,

the college, and other prominent buildings in the margins.

By great good-fortune Illinois in the geography was green, and it was green in the world also, as far as the Boy knew from such bits of it as he saw just outside the town. But when he was taken across the Mississippi to visit his Uncle Charlie in Algona, the first summer after his introduction to *Monteith's Geography*, he was greatly disturbed to find that Iowa was green too, and not pink as shown in the book. After that he doubted that China was really yellow. It had seemed so appropriate because the book said it was inhabited by the Yellow Race. In time he came to understand that the pleasant custom of distinguishing states and countries by colors that were not really true was another idiosyncrasy, like the McGuffey alphabet.

But the supreme gift of geography was maps. For a time maps superseded the alphabet in absorbing interest. The Boy made maps of the Yard, of the schoolroom, and imaginary maps of places that existed only in dreams. He invented a game, which was played with a piece of chalk on the barn floor. He drew a large and well-equipped farm, such as would have delighted the heart of the editor of an agricultural journal, so well furnished was it with barns, and cow-sheds, and pigsties, and chicken-

runs. On this farm life was lived in a plane of two dimensions. The stalls for the horses, for instance, were two short chalk-marks, and the horse itself was a black-eyed bean. Other cereals served as other live stock, such as popcorn for chickens and black beans for pigs, while scarlet runners made lovely cows and lima beans were big-hoofed draft horses. Human beings were short lengths of elder twigs, with a pin run through the pith. To make them stand you stuck the pin in the floor, and by sticking the pin through a bean and then in the floor, the man rode his horse.

This game could be left in abeyance, like chess, to be resumed when chance might offer, such as on rainy days. The variations were infinite. A creek was drawn flowing through the pasture where the leguminous cows grazed, and was bridged with a small strip of curved strawberry-box, and over this the road was drawn. A boat was a pea pod, carefully opened on the proper edge and held open by the thwarts. A circus offered an even more exciting opportunity for inventions and discoveries. Can you imagine a better hippopotamus than what the refined know as a Brazil nut, but which the Boy called "nigger toe"? The deer family were hazelnuts of various sizes, and peanuts, of course, were camels and dromedaries. A butternut with

its bark left on made an admirable elephant.

While all such were a by-product and had nothing to do with education, they did show that even knowledge could be made useful in the serious business of life.

Another great blessing that geography brought was the means it furnished of getting through the long dull hours of school. Not that the Boy was “good at” geography. He was not good at any of his studies in the orthodox sense. Instead of learning to “bound Illinois,” or “name the principal rivers,” he was off on strange journeys of his own to pink and canary-colored countries, exploring them with the diligence of a Marco Polo or a Theodore Roosevelt: countries in which he was sometimes the first white visitor. He spent hours at this fascinating pursuit, and to this day the sight of a map — especially the pale and empty maps of a school geography — brings back the hot schoolroom with its prevailing odor of chalk dust, and a small boy bending absorbed over his book, giving a counterfeit presentment of a pupil studying his lesson, while really surveying the world from China to Peru, figuring out the best water-route from Burlington, Iowa, to Yang-tse-Kiang, or wondering whether he had better climb the Himalayas or go round.

The intense interest in maps left an impression on

his mind second only to that of the alphabet. It gave him a lifelong interest in the ground plan of things. Once he had got his own tiny cosmos safely located in relation to the universe, he never afterward lost his sense of location or direction. A valuable acquisition for a deaf man, dependent on his own initiative to find his way about in the world! For in the course of time the Boy became a traveler of sorts, a real traveler, and always in strange places his recourse was to maps — countries or cities, the delightful blue-covered Bartholomew's road-maps of England and the equally delightful *Cartes Taride* of France, and then plans of museums, cathedrals, and castles. Given a map, he always found his way, and did over most of Europe, in motor car and on foot, without asking a question. Only the other day he sat about for a week on the ends of broken columns in the Roman Forum, in the sunshine of a perfect Italian spring, with maps and plans spread out on his lap, and made a delightful Roman holiday of tracing and identifying the heaped up débris of superimposed civilizations.

What he particularly liked was the world that lay just beyond the ken of the surveyor's theodolite and the mariner's sextant. And he soon learned the world's great lesson that no excursion on any map is quite so delectable in participation as it is

either in anticipation or in leisurely retrospect.

This interest aroused by the first contact with topography has flowered into an amiable hobby, a love for old maps for their own sake, like the love for old books. He feels a strong affinity for the quaint and picturesque works of those old cartographers. When they reached the confines of *terra cognita*, they cut loose from all hampering facts and drew on their imaginations, and thus made *terra incognita* the most interesting part of their maps — a form of map-making the Boy strongly approves.

X

THE EARS BEGIN TO CLOSE

MEANWHILE, school ground slowly on like a huge wheel. Each year there was a new room, a new grade, and a new teacher, but always the same old studies, though taught from bigger and bigger books. As the readers grew larger, the matter in them improved. In the later ones were gems of classic literature that whetted the Boy's appetite. The story of Gilliatt's fight with the devilfish made him a Hugo fan for life. The advanced geography was at least twice the size of its elementary predecessor, and so the personally conducted tours across its harlequin maps took on a fresher interest from the greater detail. Numbers became arithmetic and arithmetic mathematics, without greatly endearing itself in any of its forms. When the three rooms of the Central Primary had been drained dry of the education they had to impart, the Boy and his class moved on to a brick building called The High, though only two of its rooms were devoted to the purposes of a high school. But all the succeeding rooms and studies and years lacked the epochal significance of that first year in Central Primary. They were repetitions without the glamour of

novelty. When he had seen one room — the Boy thought — he had seen all. And nothing stands out with any sharpness, either teachers or lessons. A sort of mist seems to veil the next three or four years.

The reason for the mist was that the Boy was growing deafer. School seemed more futile because he heard less of it. The world-old conflict between heredity and environment was henceforth to be influenced by a new element whose effect could not be foreseen. Deafness introduced complications that required new adjustments, like deuces wild in a poker game. The cause, it seems, was measles—experienced at the age of six — at length bearing its evil fruit, but the predisposition was probably a part of his inheritance. He was at least ten years old before his condition was realized, even by himself. His fits of abstraction and oblivion were laid to inattention by the higher powers, both at home and abroad.

He supposed that all the world was a little deaf, that hearing was the reward of special exertion, the result of “paying attention” on which the teacher harped so often, and that he was for some reason incapable of paying enough attention. He sat in a seat near the front, but this was in recognition of his well-deserved reputation for mischief rather

than of his auditory shortcomings. There he heard what the teacher said, but seldom the responses of the class, — for he was not allowed to turn around in his seat, — so recitations took on the one-sided character of an overheard telephone conversation, broken only by his own participation, after which he relapsed into contraband amusements, rendered extra-hazardous by his high degree of visibility.

And this isolation extended to the playground. His deafness was but partly the reason why he never fully shared the life of the other boys. He was timid, afraid of ridicule; and his mistakes, both in school and out, made him a legitimate butt for the pitiless tyranny of the boy world. So there was no doubt a temperamental predisposition for the world he had created out of books and pictures and maps, but the deafness — even though unrecognized — aided the process. His isolation gave him more time to read, and influences were shaping him for his new adjustment to the world by developing a sort of protective coloration.

The climax came with one of those unexpected and devastating visitations of the Superintendent. The Superintendent was a mysterious individual who wore a red beard, a Prince Albert coat, and a quizzical smile, and who apparently spent his time in prowling about, laying traps and pitfalls for

unwary and ignorant pupils. His spirit was one of misleading jocularity. To encounter that red beard, even in parts of town remote from the school yard, always gave one a feeling of guilt and dismay. Even parents were not exempt. The Boy remembers a golden day when he was allowed to stay out of school to go to the circus, and the next morning set out for school armed and fortified with an official and authentic "excuse," written and signed by his father. But alas, father had seen fit to adopt the superintendential jocosity, and as the Boy had split a little kindling before going to see the parade, had chosen to say that the Boy had been kept home to work. The Boy and his "excuse" were sent to the Superintendent, who soon found out by questioning how little work the Boy had really done the day before, and he was accordingly severely punished. He does n't know to this day whether it was vicariously for his father's ill-timed levity, or because the Superintendent thought he had forged the "excuse."

The Superintendent loved to bounce into a room and pounce on an unsuspecting pupil. Sometimes it was a baffling question, — usually with a catch in it, — sometimes a hard word to spell. If the pupil was quick on his feet, well and good. If he tripped, he was covered with sarcasm and obloquy. The

Boy's exposed position in the front line made him a frequent victim. The terror of the apparition, the suddenness of the question, and the slowness of his hearing all combined to confuse him. He was like a first-baseman to whom the pitcher has unexpectedly thrown the ball. He generally muffed it. And afterward there was always that baffled feeling of having missed the question but not the answer. He had failed to understand what was wanted, but he was so sure that if he only had, he could have answered correctly. He was blamed — and blamed himself — for not being quicker at hearing.

And so one day the Superintendent popped in like Jack-in-the-box, leveled his finger at the Boy, and with the abruptness of Mr. Gradgrind commanding Girl Number Twenty to define "horse," snapped:—

"Spell 'symmetry'."

"What — what word, please?"

"Next! Inattention is worse than ignorance. *Next!*"

But this time the Boy started something. He protested — and was punished. He appealed to home authorities, and was sustained and investigated, and it was officially established that he was hard of hearing. Now that the thing was out, all sorts of instances confirmed it. It was so obvious that it seemed strange the solution was so long delayed.

The discovery gave him a momentary prominence. Some of the boys even played being deaf for a few days, and said "what" when spoken to instead of the proper reply; but the novelty soon wore off and school continued to be remote, vague, and dull. From authority he received a little more tolerance and consideration, and abused both I am afraid, and traded on his immunity, but there was little other difference. A large public school in a new Western town was no place to introduce specific instruction for the abnormal. As for the red-whiskered superintendent, he apparently never forgave him. At least he completely ignored him from then on.

Something was done about it, as the phrase is, in the way of medical treatment. Long courses of visits to dingy and bad-smelling offices at frequent and regular intervals, the expense of which the household could ill afford. The resources of aural science in that village were represented by two specialists, not always sober, even when specializing. Their ministrations were barren of results. But while waiting in the reception room of one of these doctors, a patient talked to the Boy about a wonderful cigar-shaped boat that traveled under water, and thus he was introduced to Jules Verne. He had to read this new writer surreptitiously, for his mother had one test for all books. They must be true. She

seemed to have had less difficulty than Pilate in recognizing truth. At any rate, time seems to have justified the Boy in his deceit — so much that Verne imagined has become true since.

Probably his mother's unswerving allegiance to truth, rather than lack of means, was the reason that none of the great children's books were known to him during that first ten-year period. *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver*, *Munchausen*, *Tom Sawyer*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Alice in Wonderland*, all belong to a later era, an era of conscious selection. No longer content with the resources of the little family library, he commenced to range farther, with the aid of the public library. That library had one peculiar device. A white wooden screen separated the storehouses of literature from the reading public. This screen was punched with numerous holes in even rows. Each hole was numbered and held a plug, one end red, the other blue. When a book was taken out, the librarian reversed the plug. Red was realization; blue, defeat.

But the *Arabian Nights* was not a library book. The copy the Boy read in the privacy of the hayloft was borrowed from the son of the colored barber — a fitting source, for were not barbers literary characters in the *Arabian Nights*?

XI

THE SCHOOL THAT WAS LIKE PLAY

AND then came the next great experience of his life. He was taken out of the intolerable monotony of public school and sent to a private one, so interesting and wonderful that even after forty-five years it seems like a glowing page of romance in a dull history.

Among the boys in the public school was one to whom our Boy was drawn because of his original and creative mind. He knew how to do many things. He was the nearest to a chum the Boy had ever had. His name was Will Halsey. He had three brothers and three sisters, and they lived in a large yellow house the other side of the flatiron from where the Boy lived. Behind the yellow house was a smaller one that had evidently been moved back to make room for its more splendid successor, and this old house had been fitted up as a workshop and laboratory. Apparently Will Halsey's father did nothing for a living. He had neither office nor store. He was that anomaly in a small Western town — a man of leisure, who stayed home all day long, like a minister. His means came from a pill factory in a neighboring city, run by two

brothers. The pills were not a patent medicine, but ethical pills, the white sugar-coated pellets used by homœopathic doctors as vehicles for their innocuous medicines.

Mr. Halsey puttered around in his laboratory, and gave a good deal of thought to his children and other people's also, and started various movements for the public good — a pursuit that was more original in 1878 than it is to-day.

The Halsey place was an enchanted land to all children who were permitted to go there. Its parties were marked by an originality never before seen or heard of, as how could they help being, when a man of considerable ingenuity and unusual interest in children spent much time in planning the diversions?

When the Boy was four years old he used to attend a Reading Hour given in this house, and there he listened to *Beyond the Snow*, that weird story of a boy's visit to an imaginary country that surrounds the North Pole, which was one of his earliest memories.

So you can imagine with what excitement the Boy came home from school one day to announce:—

“Will Halsey's father is going to start a school. Each of the Halsey boys is going to ask one fellow, so there will be eight boys. It's going to cost fifty cents a week. Will has asked me. Can I go?”

Strange as it now seems in retrospect, the Boy was allowed to go. Not that one had great faith in Mr. Halsey as an educator. He fell far short of the high standard set by the Superintendent with the red beard. Not much was expected from a school which sounded so frivolous in the index. But at least the Boy could hardly be worse off than he was now in public school. The growing deafness was really the deciding factor in giving the Boy the first real education he ever had. For here was a school exactly as the Boy would have planned it. It filled life with interest and gave him an outlet for his energies. All conventional ideas were turned upside down. What was looked upon in the regular school as play, was here the chief business of the hour. Every day a new game was started. One fascination was that you never knew what was going to happen, while the curse of the regular school was that you so drearily knew that nothing would happen. The Halsey school apparently had no programme — or rather, its programme was unfolded much the way that life presents new experiences.

Some mornings one armed one's self with a small machinist's hammer, and the class set off across the fields to crack open the boulders found in the course of the walk, and learn their history and travels as recorded in the strata and interpreted by Mr. Halsey.

Sometimes the boulders were hollow and lined with crystals, a sort of geological treasure-trove. The Boy did not know he was studying geology. He did not know he was studying at all. Another day there would be a visit to the brickyard or foundry to see how things were made, and then a return to the workshop to make miniature bricks or castings of soft metal.

The creek that flowed through the place was a continuous stream of impromptu lessons in mechanics and hydrostatics. A dam was built and the fall used to turn a water wheel which propelled miniature machinery. On the surface of the lake thus created, a very early form of model power-boats with side wheels — some driven by clock-work, and others by an ingenious application of stretched rubber and twisted string — darted back and forth. And both the making and the operating of these devices were part of the school work.

For two weeks before the Fourth we all united on chemistry, making fireworks to celebrate that holiday appropriately.

The workshop was equipped with all sorts of tools. The Boy learned to drive a nail, bore a hole, and saw a board — knowledge at least as useful in after life as the differential and integral calculus he never quite succeeded in comprehending. He was

taught to run a lathe; and forty-five years afterward, when he took up wood-turning as a recreation, the old technique came back to him across the years as he unconsciously swung his gouge for the sweep cut he had learned at the age of ten.

One morning, when the boys were gathered in the schoolroom where the programme for the day was announced and discussed, the Boy heard for the first time the story of the guileless prince who agreed to buy the Arab's horse at a penny for the first nail, two for the second, doubling as many times as there were nails in all four shoes; and the lesson was to determine what the prince really paid. First the barn was visited to count the nails in a horseshoe. Nothing was told the boys that they could find out, and observation was sedulously cultivated. When the class finally surveyed the stupendous total, they were as much surprised as the prince, and the Boy never forgot this lesson in geometrical progression.

A vaster enterprise was figuring the cost of building a house. “What was the first thing you have to have to build a house?” Mr. Halsey asked. One boy hopefully suggested “a hole.” No, the first thing was a plan. So a plan was drawn on the blackboard, and the class rushed off to collect information. One visited the lumber-yard to ask the price of scantling, siding, lath, and shingles.

Another, the hardware store for quotations on nails and builders' hardware. A third found out how much carpenters and masons were paid. This sum took days to complete. One had to go back continually for additional data. When all the figures were assembled, the grand total was worked out. The Boy little knew that it was the despised arithmetic he was learning so joyously. To-day what little figuring he feels compelled to do derives from such experiences rather than from the graded textbooks.

The school had no hours, and its schoolroom was wherever one happened to be. It was as innocent of form and place as that little group that used to follow Aristotle around. In this intimate relation and with lots of things to do, the Boy found his deafness of slight disadvantage. He had hearing enough for such instruction, and he had a powerful stimulus—interest. There were no semesters and no vacations. What was the use of vacation when there was nothing to do more interesting than what one did at school? But it must have been in the season when vacation would have interrupted a less fascinating school that the class spent a week or so camping on the banks of Spoon River—the real river, not the state of mind that Mr. Masters has made you acquainted with. The outfit was loaded

on what was known as a democrat wagon — the Boy wondered why there was no Republican wagon — and the boys rode fifteen miles to a grove beside the classic stream and made a camp. They swam, and caught catfish, and scraped mussels — in which one sometimes found a fresh-water pearl — from the bottom of the creek, and practised such simple woodcraft as dressing frogs' legs and broiling them on a sharpened stick over the fire.

Such detached incidents as memory supplies would fail to give a coherent idea of this school, except that its formula is to-day well known, and indeed followed in many of the best modern schools. That formula is, of course, that a boy will learn more when he is interested than when he is not. But it was new when Mr. Halsey tried it and when there was a sort of educational heresy in the attempt to make school attractive. In the Boy's case the orthodox school did not have even the orthodox interest, so the effect of the new method was even farther-reaching. He has a vague idea that this free and easy teaching, depending altogether upon the personality of one man, was much like that described in *Little Men*, but it is so long since he read Miss Alcott that he may be confusing the two. He does n't remember if he ever knew whether Miss Alcott's Plumfield had an original, or whether it

THE SCHOOL THAT WAS LIKE PLAY 87

was merely a pleasant bit of her imagination.

Nor does he know just why his Plumfield ended, as it did, after a year or two. He does recall that the Halsey family moved away to that city where the pill factory was located, and assumes that the business demanded the silent partner's attention and that the school ceased on that account. The Boy was returned to public school, not without its protest over receiving him back, particularly in respect to allowing credit for the interregnum during which he had learned so little, according to the criterion of conventional pedagogy, but so much measured by the needs and opportunities of life; but finally he was reinstated, and was soon on his way toward High School, some two years off.

XII

THE SIX-AND-TWENTY LEAD SOLDIERS

WHEN the Boy was about twelve years old the family outgrew the little house in Monmouth Road, and moved to a more stately mansion in the Fifth Ward. The little house was rented to a printer named Joe Coe. But even so little a house was too stately for Mr. Coe, and he moved out suddenly, so suddenly that he abandoned various articles, in lieu, it is presumed, of certain installments of unpaid rent. One of these articles was a rude printing press of which the Boy became residuary legatee. As far as he was concerned, Mr. Coe had fulfilled his destiny.

The press was a hand press, made into foot-power by the simple device of attaching a rod to the hand lever and connecting it with a home-made treadle, hinged to the box on which the press stood. It lacked the steadying influence of a flywheel, and was difficult to run on that account. You stood on one foot and the upward swing of the treadle almost upset you, while the strain on your back was terrific; but what of that? It was a press, The Press in fact, destined to become another influence shaping the Boy's life, along with his love of reading, his deaf-

ness, and the Halsey school which first taught him to use eyes and hands.

The chase — the iron frame in which set-up type is locked for printing — was ten by fourteen inches, large enough, the Boy noted with secret joy, to print a book, by the simple process of setting up a page, running it off, distributing the type, and then setting up the next, in the same slow manner that had produced Caxtons and Elzevirs.

The Boy established his press in the woodshed of the new home and sought type for it. He scorned the small outfits of job type sold with amateur presses, described in catalogues as “2A4a,” which were only sufficient to set up a line or two. He desired a full font of body type. He dreamed of printing books and publishing periodicals. The local newspaper office sold him a font of well-worn nonpareil at about three times its value as old type-metal, and the Boy dragged the two heavy cases home on his cart. From the same source he secured a few odd strips of furniture, some reglets, slugs, wood quoins, and a battered composing stick, the names and uses of which he had already learned from a book. For an imposing-stone he used the broken marble slab that had been the top of a washstand. Mother covered a small block of wood with cotton flannel for a proof-planer, the mallet was

borrowed from his toolchest, the shooting stick was a strip of wood with a notch cut in it, and the galley a shallow cigar-box. Thus equipped, the press began to function on a certain day in June forty-three years ago, a date that should be carefully preserved for future historians writing the annals of early presses in the Military Tract of Illinois.

The books that played the part of destiny in making the Boy a printer were two. One was not really a book at all, though later made into one, but a serial in *St. Nicholas*, the story of *Phaeton Rogers*, by Rossiter Johnson. It revolved around the adventures of a group of boys with a printing press, and was undoubtedly a record of actual experience. The mistakes and triumphs of Fay and his friends furnished the inspiration, but knowledge of the art was obtained from a quite different book. In the Public Library was a long row of the seemingly inexhaustible works of Jacob Abbott — the Franconia stories, the Rollo books, and the Harper Story Books. From some obscure source the Boy learned that Jacob Abbott was known as Snibuggledyboozlum in the intimacy of the family circle — but possibly that was his brother John S. C., also a prolific writer. The present generation may not know that Jacob Abbott was the father of the late Lyman Abbott.

THE
HARPER
ESTABLISHMENT;
OR,
HOW THE STORY BOOKS ARE MADE.



NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS.

THE BOOK THAT MADE ME A PRINTER

The Boy devoured the whole row, as he did everything in print that came his way. The Harper Story Books were not all fiction, though he remembers stories with such delectable titles as *Timboo and Joliba*; but most of them were useful books, and one of the usefulest was entitled, *The Harper Establishment, or How the Story Books Are Made*, by Jacob Abbott, New York, Harper & Brothers, publishers, 1855. This was a pretty little book, miscalled a small quarto by the publishers, the title page embellished with a border of trees, hanging baskets, and cherubs, and in the center a vignette of the hospitably wide-open door of the Harper Establishment. To a printer's eye a noticeable and pleasing peculiarity was the running titles. Beneath the regular page-heading were two parallel rules, between which were bits of text or subtitles, indexing the matter on the page, a style no one apparently has used since.

The book was copiously illustrated with woodcuts, after designs by a German artist named Doeppler. There was a picture of the youthful Franklin running lightly upstairs, carrying two heavy forms of type, as a rebuke to the other printers who drank beer and could therefore carry but one at a time. There were many views of the old printing-house in Franklin Square, with the spiral staircase outside in

the court, which the Boy recalled when he came to work there fifteen years later, now alas abandoned by the firm which was once so proud of it.

So realistic were Doepler's pictures and so detailed old Snibuggledyboozlum's text, that the Boy learned the name and use of each article employed in printing. *The Harper Establishment* was his manual of instruction. For the rest, he learned by doing. The type was in the cases. All he had to do was to find it. He drew letters of the alphabet on bits of cardboard and stuck them in the corners of the boxes, and thus learned his case. He soon acquired the knack of picking up the type right end to, with the nick uppermost ready for placing in the stick, and that once learned, speed came with practice.

Comparatively soon he had set up and imposed one page of *The Young Naturalist*, a learned work, as its name reveals. That particular summer of 1880 the chief interest of the boys was natural science. Under the auspices of *St. Nicholas* a chapter of the Agassiz Association had been formed, and we were all collecting fossils, birds' eggs, and butterflies. So one enthusiasm was linked to another, and *The Young Naturalist* was filled with matter that would have edified the editor of *The Outline of Science*. It was planned as a monthly, but a month was not

THE ILLINOIS GLOBE.

"THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD."

VOL. 1.

GALESBURGH, ILL., JAN., 1884.

No. 1

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

CAN it be possible that a new year has arrived? When we look back to January 1. 1883, it seems only a few weeks. But it is a fact not to be denied that we are on the threshold of 1884. And with the new year comes something else, The Illinois Globe. It is an experiment in the interests of Amateur Journalism. We shall endeavor to keep the Globe from an early grave and to do this we need the hearty support of all amateur editors. Previous to the issue of this number we have been belabored by flattering correspondents to enter the 'dom because they said the 'dom might flatter herself on the entree of such votaries as ourselves!! So the Illinois Globe is before you. Through its pages the editors will advance their opinions on matters of general interest and endeavor to make their influence felt for the good of the American Youth. We will do our best to impress the boys of the land with the importance of good reading and will unhesitatingly denounce such periodicals as the New York Weekly, Fireside Companion, Family Story Paper and a

host of others which only pour out the lowest and most degrading of literature. We have faith that the dime novel trash is being slowly but surely driven out by cheap good reading. We will endeavor to be moderate in all things and view both sides of a question before establishing an opinion. If our paper is looked for monthly and appreciated by the amateur public our object will have been accomplished. C. F. G.

—If Lawrence B. Stringer keeps up his connection with the P. S. A. P. A. we can think of no more desirable candidate for the Prairie State presidency in '84 than he. We have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Stringer and can say that a more pleasant, genial and withal interested amateur would be hard to find. Time flies and ere we know it July and the conventions will be here and there will be none too much time for amateurs to air their preferences for the various offices.

"FALSE friends are like shadows, following us everywhere in the sunshine but leaving us when we enter the shade." —ANON.

ONE OF THE MANY "VOLS. I, NOS. I"

sufficient time in which to set up and print a number. Finances had not permitted the purchase of many leads, so all matter was set solid, and it takes a lot to fill a five-by-eight inch page with solid nonpareil. Also a stickful was ticklish stuff for twelve-year-old fingers, catastrophes were frequent, and much time was wasted distributing "pi." Then there was the sad day when Piggy Nash sat down on an entire page, left standing without support of string or furniture, and publication was delayed another week.

So only Vol. I, No. 1 of *The Young Naturalist* appeared that summer. School slowed down the operation of the press, the wonders of science lost interest, and a literary journal was started, bearing the absurd name of *Illinois Globe*. That was the year of the National Amateur Press Association. All over the country boys were editing and publishing miniature papers which they exchanged with each other, — indeed, that was all the circulation they had, — but only a few of the hardy ones got beyond the Vol. I, No. 1 stage.

XIII

THE BOOK AND JOB PRINT

THE Boy attended the public schools in what might be called a subjunctive mood. There was no conviction on the part of the teacher, or parent, or the Boy himself for that matter, that school was the place for him. But it was the only place there was, and the problem deafness presented to education seemed too difficult for solution. And so he continued to go for the next two years, existing meanwhile in a half-world, never quite sharing the life of either the schoolroom or the playground. It was not the normal boy life that Mark Twain and Thomas Bailey Aldrich have made classic. He never learned to swim or play baseball, and though he clung to the fringe of boy life, he was never quite free from the fear that the other boys were guying him — as of course they were, but not more than they geyed each other. But the self-consciousness which came from not knowing what was going on around him held him aloof, gave him false notions, and unduly influenced his mental attitude for years to come.

Increasingly the question came up whether it would n't be better for him to go to work. It was

an economic question, for the family resources did not permit a defective idler, and while school was possible as long as school got him anywhere, it was wondered whether, in view of his performance, he had not better be learning something by which he could earn a living. The Boy was insistent that he wanted to be a printer. The press in the woodshed had not lost its charm. He had carried newspapers, and while waiting for his allotment to be run off he had watched with eager curiosity the printers practising their mystery. He had seen the "father of the chapel" go to the imposing-stone and rap with the mallet, and the compositors, their sleeves rolled up displaying their red undershirts, gather round, while the father "jeffed" with a handful of em-quads, throwing them on the stone as one throws dice, to decide, according to the number of nicks uppermost, who should be sent for a pail of beer or have the first go at a "fat" take. He knew from his reading that a printing office was called a "chapel" because Caxton had set up his press in Westminster Abbey. The unmistakable odor of the shop, a blend of roller composition and benzine, filled his nostrils like the perfumes of Araby. He did not reason out that printing was a fit occupation for a deaf man. He was drawn to the craft by its picturesqueness, its history and traditions, handed

down from the days of Pynson and Wynken de Worde. His liking for books, the fascination of the alphabet, the strange vocabulary of the trade, all intrigued him with an appeal that he acknowledges to this day.

So father had a talk with the proprietors of the weekly paper, and one June day at the beginning of the long vacation the Boy began work in the shop of the Press and People Book and Job Steam Print. It was his mission to furnish the steam rather than the print. Each morning he kindled the fire under the boiler of the wheezy old engine, and then swept and cleaned the shop, raking up the huge pile of paper-cuttings that accumulated around the knife where books and jobs were trimmed. He washed down forms with lye that ate skin off his fingers. He wrapped the papers for mailing and stuck the addresses on them. He ran errands with proofs to be submitted to customers. He did all the chores that fall to the boy in a printing office, and when there was nothing else to do, he was allowed to set type. His hours were from six-thirty to six-thirty, with an hour at noon for dinner, and his only pay for the first six months was an occasional encouraging word from the stuttering one of the two proprietors.

The printing office was one long room over

Charlie Merrill's clothing store on Main Street, with a small cubby fenced off in the corner — the editorial sanctum, seldom used for editing or any other purpose. Its old-fashioned desk was piled high with Messages and Documents covered with dust, proofs, and unopened exchanges; and when the editor was moved to edit he put a handful of copy paper on the corner of the imposing-stone, where he did most of his work and felt more at home. There were three windows at each end of the long room, and the type cases and frames clustered around these for the sake of the light. The presses filled the space between: the cylinder for printing the weekly, and such book and pamphlet work as came to the shop, and two Gordons for handbills, dodgers, and letterheads.

The *Press and People* had two proprietors — as different as Mutt and Jeff. One was short and round, with a beard and a stutter that somehow added to the impression of amiability he produced. He was a German, a job printer, a Republican, and a member of the G. A. R., and was loyal to all these allegiances. He published a Republican newspaper in the hope that the party would recognize his devotion and reward it accordingly — which the party never did. When the editor of the rival newspaper wanted to be particularly nasty, he would

quote one of the *Press and People's* editorials thus, “The *Press and People* says: ‘The Rep-p-publican p-p-party’ ”

The other was tall and lean and hungry-looking, with a long neck and round shoulders, and owned a perpetual grouch. As he gloomed from behind the imposing-stone, silhouetted against the windows at the other end of the shop, with his hands folded on his stomach under his blue denim apron, he looked like some species of long-legged marsh bird. From what few scraps of the talk the Boy was able to hear he gathered that Iram was “agin” everything. He hated the church, the college, and anyone who was making money, and for some inexplicable reason he apparently blamed the Boy for the state of affairs. If he had ever heard of a Socialist, he would have been one.

A country newspaper office is the repository of all the gossip and scandal of the town. When the superintendent of the Baptist Sunday School skipped out for Texarkana with some of his firm's money, the paper regretfully headed the item “another good man gone wrong”; but the cynical verdict of the shop was that another bad man had been found out. The anecdotes the printers told one another while throwing in their cases on Saturdays were the prairie versions of the droll stories Balzac found

current among the abbeys of Touraine, but owing to his misfortune the Boy missed his proverbial peck of dirt. All his life he has failed to get the point of an indecent story, because from the nature of the case it could not be shouted into the ears of a deaf man. It is just possible that his indomitable optimism is partly due to the fact that he never did know the "worst."

This was the environment in which Lee Masters grew up, — he was a classmate at college, — and it no doubt furnished material which found expression in *Spoon River Anthology*.

Meanwhile, the Boy learned his trade. After the chores were done up he was installed on a high stool in front of the type frame, with a piece of reprint copy before him, held flat by a slug tied to a bit of string, a composing stick in his hand, and his setting rule — the immemorial badge of the printer — in the stick, and began to put in type a seemingly endless stream of patent medicine "readers," which fell to his lot because everyone hated them. These were set to resemble straight reading-matter, and indeed constituted a large percentage of the home-set matter in the paper, as four of its pages were "boiler plate," and much of the remaining four filled with the display "ads" of the local merchants. The "readers" rehearsed symptoms of various ills so

graphically that one was able to recognize them, and with the aid of what is now called autosuggestion to experience them — at least the Boy did, and seldom finished the day's work without at least a touch of rheumatism, eczema, consumption, liver complaint, in fact, nearly everything in the *materia medica*. Among the unforgettable names so familiar then, but happily driven more or less to cover now, were Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, St. Jacob's Oil, Piso's Cure for Consumption, and Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery.

Big Sweeney, the foreman, prepared a case by sticking job type in the corner of each box to identify it; a big *A* in the *a* box, *B* in the *b* box, and so on, which the Boy indignantly snatched out; for did he not already know his case? Indeed, he had expected to astound his instructor with his proficiency. In his head ran that old story of Franklin seeking work in a London printing office, and answering the sarcastic inquiry of the foreman, "What! You are from America, and know how to set type?" by stepping to the case and quickly setting up the lines: "And Nathaniel said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see." The Boy had hoped for a chance to spring this, but instead, the men set up insulting and derisive couplets in his

stick whenever he had to leave his case, not only maddening, but necessitating distribution before he could go on with his work. He was the butt of all the time-honored printing-house jokes, because he was the printer's devil and a green one at that, and still more because he was deaf; but notwithstanding, he had a sort of affection for the shop and the men in it. It was his first place of employment and the school where he learned the rudiments of his trade.

It was a typical country newspaper office, duplicated in every small town all over the West, but now practically extinct. The itinerant printer who drifted from town to town was the connecting link that kept them so much alike: the same jokes, the same stories, the same customs. These "tourists" appealed to the Boy's imagination, they were so free and adventurous, and had traveled so much, with only their setting-rules as necessary baggage. They could always secure work where work was to be had. The Boy dreamed of emulating them and taking to the open road, armed with the same magic talisman and the craft which its possession vouched for. And then some new outrage on the part of the men, in which the last-arrived tourist enthusiastically participated, made him realize how far he was from being a journeyman.

By the time straight matter had begun to pall, he was allowed to set up some of the less important display jobs, — a milk ticket, for instance, — and immediately a new world opened up to him: the world of taste in typography. Not that the taste was much in evidence, but it was necessary to choose the type to be used from the far too many display faces, and to arrange them after some fashion. The rule appeared to be, every line a different face, and every line centered. He strove earnestly to create something with the type, something that would deserve the approval of the round-shouldered marsh bird, perhaps, but what he did was both ugly and unconventional. The foreman preferred the conventional ugliness that was familiar and established. Yet in these struggles to express his half-baked and untaught ideas he unconsciously developed a leaning which later led him to give to advertising typography the importance it deserved.

While not permitted to “make ready,” — though he had done it for his own press,—he fed the milk tickets and other jobs to the Gordon press, and one glorious day, in some emergency or other, he fed the weekly into the big cylinder, a work requiring incredible dexterity. The sheets had been dampened overnight to make them take the ink, and were piled high on the feed board. With his fingernail

he riffled them, and then picked them up, one by one, and slid them against the gauges. If he missed, as he did at first, it was necessary to grab the lever and stop the press. If the type reached the tympan without any paper between, it would offset and spoil the sheets for many impressions. The press did not stop or start easily, and the process was strenuous and exciting. When it happened, each partner expressed himself in his own way — one with a mildly stuttered “Tch! Tch!” and the other with a volley of profanity audible even to the deafened. But presswork did not appeal to the Boy, though he knew it was necessary to complete the act of printing and give typography its visible form. It was handling the type that thrilled him and gave him the feeling of being linked to the illustrious line of Plantin and Franklin.

Even after he had returned to school he maintained his contact with printing, working at it Saturdays and vacations. The trade was so constituted then that one could easily secure a case at a moment's notice and for a single day. Some printer was always looking for a “sub,” as a preliminary to a spree or the consequence of having had one.

XIV

SINE LAUDE

THE question of education continued to resemble the motion to adjourn, by being always in order. High School had been difficult, though a *modus operandi* had been worked out between himself and his teachers, due especially to the patience and sympathy of the Latin teacher, Miss McCall. He continued the course through inertia rather than enthusiasm, and graduated without honor, more interested in printing than in school. Meanwhile he read prodigiously, and this reading — even though much of it was trash — must have offset to some extent the lack of formal teaching.

The Boy longed for college, not the fresh-water institution so conveniently located in his home town, but some great Eastern university where he would of course distinguish himself. Like the athlete in Plutarch, if he were only in Rhodes, he could jump sixteen paces. But there the college was. The expense was small and he could live at home, while the cost of going away to school was serious enough to be the deciding factor when the advantages were so uncertain.

One day the Boy's father met the most popular

member of the college faculty on the street and asked him if he should send the Boy to college.

“Why not?”

“Well, he is quite deaf. I wondered if he could hear enough to do him any good.”

“You send him along,” said the professor. “I’ll make him hear.”

And he did. This professor’s department was mathematics, and the Boy hated mathematics; but in spite of his antipathy he was not immune against Professor Churchill’s energy, good humor, and ringing voice. The professor taught the binomial theorem as if he were hailing a three-decker. He had no stiffness and no formality. The Boy was taught willy-nilly, and much to his own and everybody’s else surprise, he took high marks in algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. Unfortunately, no other teacher in the college had the physical energy to add to his regular round of pedagogical labors the problem of making a deaf boy hear. The Boy drifted, dividing his time between classroom attendance and private teaching. There were college graduates glad to add to their incomes even the small sum which the Boy was able to pay for special teaching, and the help thus obtained enabled him to go on. As it was, he just got through, conditioned in one course. The erstwhile editor of *The Young*

Naturalist, charter member of the Agassiz Association, who at the age of eleven had cracked rocks in personally conducted scientific excursions, failed to pass in geology.

For four years he sat in the various classrooms, hearing almost nothing, content or at least resigned to make a passable performance when called on, ignorant of how his classmates did, and missing the stimulus when they were good and the consolation when they were bad. The recitation hours were a little less tedious when there was something to look at, as there always was in mathematical studies, and to some extent in physics and chemistry. But it was forlorn at best, and he wonders now how he ever endured it.

He had one small accomplishment, that of writing, and by it he endeavored to win some sort of recognition in the college world.

His temperament was such that he needed outside approbation to keep him at work. In Western colleges in those days almost the only road to fame was oratory. The intercollegiate oratorical contests held the same place in those prairie colleges that athletics did in the salt-water universities. A winner of the Intercollegiate represented his institution in the Interstate, and the winner of that enjoyed for a season the popularity and fame of the halfback

who has made the winning goal. But Nature did not intend him for a public speaker even before she stopped his ears. The instructor in elocution — a remarkable woman, responsible for a long dynasty of winners — labored with him, for she felt a friendly interest, but was forced to confess defeat. He could not speak in public.

College politics was equally closed. Participation in the affairs of the student body was another road to that prominence the Boy so earnestly coveted, but this also seemed to depend on hearing. When a meeting was called one got up and stated one's views, and from such volunteers were selected the men who were to run that particular activity — literary society, class presidency, oratorical association. To speak it was necessary to hear. Even if he had been able to attain office he would have been unable to act, for the simplest participation in a meeting required knowing what was going on. In spite of this, the Boy attended all the meetings, as well as numerous prize debates, declamation and oratorical contests, and open meetings. He heard only a small fraction of what went on, the tedium was well nigh intolerable, but it was the only world he knew. He doggedly maintained a position of being in his world, if not of it. Never again did he pass through such a slough of despond.

One field of honor was open to him. He secured an appointment to the staff of the college magazine, which bore the absurd name of *Coup d'État*. Everybody called it the "Coop" except the venerable president of the college, who said "Coo," to the astonishment of the Boy — who knew no French. The name recorded the enterprise of a group of students who stole a march on a rival faction and produced the first number of their new magazine in a single night. It may be worth noting that two of that group were John Phillips and Sam McClure, the founders of *McClure's Magazine*.

In his senior year the Boy was elected editor-in-chief. Here both writing and printing began to stand him in stead. For the first time after five years of struggle he found something to do in connection with college life. True, even so elementary a form of journalism as a college monthly required some modicum of hearing for its successful performance, but much of the work that required ears could be assigned, and he had a certain fitness for the rest. Secure at last in a job within his reach, and where the terrible vagueness that obscured all other contacts with life was not so evident, he began to edit with all his might, giving even less attention than before to the curriculum he was remotely pursuing. Not only did he edit and write for the *Coup d'État*,

but he put much of it in type; an arrangement easily made in a country printshop. It was thus he acquired the knack of putting his contributions directly into type without the necessity of first writing them out. This practice made for brevity, and also strengthened the bond which already existed between his mind and the printed page. He began to be solicitous of the physical appearance of his magazine, adding to that typographical consciousness which had first stirred in him as he set the milk tickets four or five years previous. This year of editing, writing, and printing — of seeing his ideas carried through under his own supervision to the completed magazine, was the most valuable education he obtained from college.

His acquaintance with local newspapers and his official position as college editor led to another job even more difficult. He was — with some misgivings — made editor of the college news published every Thursday in the local daily paper. For most of the year this meant only a column of brevities a week, with a special story about any function or entertainment; but reporting commencement made a busy week. Commencement lasted the entire week, from Thursday to Thursday, with exercises every afternoon and evening, and all day on commencement day. There were reunions of the literary

societies, declamation contests, prize debates, class day exercises, baccalaureate sermon, commencement itself, a long programme of essays and orations, — essays by the girls and orations by the boys, — salutatory and valedictory; and then the week ended with the president's reception. It was all very long and dull and staid, and would not be put up with by the modern undergraduate. Even in the early years attendance at these functions had been an appalling ordeal for the Boy, but now he faced an almost insurmountable task. He must not only attend them all but write an intelligent account in the shortest possible time, for one solid week, of exercises he could not hear. But already he had become proficient in the art of faking. He had reported many unheard programmes. He knew personally nearly everybody who took part, he had the friendly coöperation of classmates, and wherever possible he obtained in advance the written copy and made a synopsis. Fortunately for him, the distinguished Chicago divine who delivered the baccalaureate was one who wrote his sermons carefully in advance. The Boy borrowed the manuscript Saturday night. He worked over it so hard that he could probably have risen in the pulpit next morning and delivered it from memory. The text still clings to his mind: “Buy the truth and sell it not”; and he

wondered if he were selling the truth to resort to such subterfuges, not for the fifteen dollars the week's work would pay him, but for the sake of trying to establish himself as a newspaper man.

No doubt he made more mistakes than he or anyone ever knew. One, for instance, caused him an uncomfortable session with the director of the conservatory. He praised with what he thought discriminating appreciation a vocal solo — which happened to be a piano selection. Of course his eyes should have prevented him from making such a foolish error. One could tell a vocal from an instrumental selection by looking. But unfortunately he did not remain through the concert, and the printed programme he carried away did not help him. As the performer was one who both sang and played, he made a guess at the truth, with lamentable results.

Nevertheless, his week's work brought favorable comment from both the college public and the irascible old editor of the paper. Though weak on the things that were said, — really the dull part of the show, which few except the performers ever look at in print, — he was good at describing the spirit of the affair, and so substituted a lively account for an accurate one. Nor was he able to resist the impulse to inject a little humor into his

stories; so he came out far better than he deserved.

But these preoccupations and his poor record in the classrooms brought their catastrophe. After final examinations, he was formally notified that he was conditioned in geology and would not be allowed to graduate unless he worked off the condition. The news found him in a defiant mood. The condition was merely the last straw. He had no intention of working it off. He took a sardonic satisfaction in writing his reply to the trustees. If he had got anything out of the college, they could not take it away from him; if he had not, a degree would not give him anything. Having hurled his defiance into the teeth of Fate, or words to that effect, he stalked off to the newspaper office and began his life work.

Fortunately — or unfortunately — the trustees could not let the matter end on this note. After all, the Boy was a "town boy," and town boys had a way of sticking reproachfully around and turning up again like Banquo's ghost. It had always been difficult to expel a town boy. It had been tried once or twice, and somehow the event failed to justify itself. Some of the expelled students became successful business men, and ultimately trustees of the college. Commencement morning the board held a meeting, voted down the veto of the faculty, and sent word to the printing office that if the Boy

would come to the opera house that morning, he should receive his A.B. After considerable struggle with himself — he did hate to surrender his heroic position — the Boy washed up, hurried home, donned his Prince Albert coat without which no male student could properly graduate, turned up before the exercises were over, and received a mild ovation from the class and a square yard of imitation sheepskin from the kind-hearted old president, who had been very unhappy about the whole affair.

XV

THE PRIZE ADVERTISEMENT

THE Boy finished his college life with few regrets. He had not succeeded in establishing himself in any respect, and suffered great humiliation from the futility of his life, from his inability to use what small accomplishments he possessed to advance himself. He realized in a vague way that his teachers were baffled and could not decide how much of his poor performance was due to unwillingness to work and how much to inability to hear. Of course it was a mixture of both. The Boy missed the emulation that would have been a spur to him, the impulse to show off. As his deafness prevented him from making an impressive appearance either in the classroom or on the campus, he rather sullenly abandoned all attempts, and picked up his education in devious ways. In the long run it seems to have answered. Graduated by the skin of his teeth and established in the newspaper office in what he supposed was his life job, he began to lead a sort of amphibious existence, writing copy and setting type.

Thus it occasionally fell to him to set up the crude advertisements prepared with such tribulation by the local merchants, written as often as not on a

sheet of wrapping paper. He felt in a dim way the poverty of ideas which characterized them, their lack of anything approaching attractive physical form, and he tried with unskilled hands to give them some measure of interest by means of type. And as he worked on them he rewrote them in his mind, embroidering the meagre and uninspired facts with his own fancies. In this work he was stimulated and inspired by the teaching and example of a tiny weekly periodical, which was one of the exchanges which came to the office. The name of this periodical was *Printers' Ink*, and it was the first publication devoted to the new science, or art, of advertising. In time he mustered up sufficient confidence to make tentative suggestions of his own to the merchants, based on what he had learned from the little magazine. These suggestions were accepted sufficiently often to establish him regularly in the work of preparing all the advertising matter for a number of dealers up and down Main Street, who jumped at the chance of relief from what was probably the hardest part of their job.

One of his customers was a hardware dealer who happened to be the son of the breezy, strong-lunged college professor who had taught him mathematics. This man proved to be Fate, thinly disguised. Through him came an opportunity which proved to



A Sweeping Statement . . .

A new broom sweeps clean, but a Bissell Sweeper not only is newer, stays new longer, and sweeps cleaner than a broom, but cleaner than any other kind of sweeping apparatus, at less cost of exertion and money.

The only way to sweep with the old kinds of sweepers was to put fifty pounds of muscle into the handle. You "just push" the Bissell.

And it costs but 35c a year.

The Baby Bissell, a plaything that will work—a little sweeper just like mama's—sweeps the floor, and amuses the little girl—Christmas present? Just the thing.

"We Never Sleep."

The G. B. Churchill Co.,

Yellow Front.

THE PRIZE-WINNING ADVERTISEMENT

be another event in that chain of incidents, trivial in themselves, which were steadily pointing out to him what heredity and environment intended him to do with himself. The manufacturer of a carpet-sweeper — then the novel domestic implement the vacuum cleaner now is — offered a prize of fifty dollars, open to hardware dealers and their employees, for the best advertisement of a carpet-sweeper as a Christmas present. It was stipulated that each advertisement entered for the prize must first be printed in a local newspaper, which meant that the generous carpet-sweeper manufacturer received about ten thousand dollars' worth of free space in return for his fifty dollars. It was easy to construe the Boy as an employee of the hardware store, for was he not its advertising man? The hardware man said, "Go to it," and he went. He set up his copy out of his head, giving it substance and form with the same operation, and the advertisement was duly run in the store's regular space in the newspaper and then submitted for the prize.

One of the three judges bore a name already familiar to the Boy. He had seen it in *Printers' Ink*, not only signed to articles about advertising practice, but also to advertisements telling about a new service which was available to business houses. It was a name with which he was to have a deal to do

in the future, but for the present it simply meant to him that his effort was to be passed on by the leaders of the infant profession. That name was Charles Austin Bates. Soon the announcements of the results of the then novel contest were spread in the pages of the hardware-trade papers. There were 1,433 entries, and the Boy's name, like Abou Ben Adhem's, led all the rest.

From that time the Boy began to think seriously of advertising. The prize advertisement completed the work begun when he cut the different letters of the alphabet from advertisements in the town weekly so many years ago and pasted them together in new forms. He was now ready for the adventure of living.

Such was the problem with which I had to deal when I was twenty-three years old. Here was a boy, born with conflicting influences from the two streams that composed his parentage, who had acquired in these first years of his life a love for books: not merely for reading, but for books — their writing, printing, and binding; who had somehow found within himself a strange affinity for letters and words, for the alphabet, for the putting of ideas graphically on the page; who had learned to observe, to use his hands, to handle tools, and to find

within himself such amusement as he was to have; all this emphasized by early contact with type, presses, bookbinders' tools; and finally, who became deaf so early in life that he must create from this equipment not only his means of livelihood, but whatever amusement he was to get out of life. What was he to do? How was he to use this haphazard endowment?

I was interested in the answer because at this time the boy was turned over to me. I became responsible for him in a sense that I had not been during those formative years. What education he received then was given him by circumstances over which he had little control, and so I have spoken of him and his adventures as I really see them, objectively, as disconnected experiences with long misty spaces between. But from now on I will speak of him as myself.

XVI

SO THIS IS NEW YORK

THE impulse to go to New York was part of no plan other than an unreasoned desire to get away from the town where I grew up, and from which I had never been farther away than one hundred and sixty miles. I was twenty-three years old. I had been graduated from its high school and its college, in each case without praise, and had spent the summer setting type in a local printshop. My pay was ten dollars a week and I had saved nearly seventy dollars. Deafness had progressed to a point where I heard nothing not specifically directed to me, but I had a trade for which hearing was not essential and by which I believed I could earn a living anywhere. My terms were modest; a living was all I asked. I had no dreams of conquest. Thus far I had fought the battle of life ingloriously on the defensive, and now meditated flight, hoping to do somewhere else what I had utterly failed to do where I was. Parents and employers both opposed the move, and wisely, too. I had a job where I was, and no promise of one where I was going. But conditions had become intolerable. I hated the town and everything in it. And so I left, burning my bridges —

including that across Spoon River — behind me.

Late one evening the Albany Day Boat deposited me at the foot of Desbrosses Street — which I did not then know how to pronounce — with twenty-eight dollars, a setting-rule, and my union printers' card among my impedimenta.

The only hotel I had ever heard of was the Astor House. There I secured a room at the exorbitant rate of one dollar. Where I came from twenty-five cents was still the price of a square meal. When I awoke next morning I was startled to discover beside the window a large coil of rope, one end securely fastened to the casement. I got up, walked to the window and looked out. Immediately beneath me was a graveyard. So this was New York.

One of my few acquaintances was a law student, who has since become a judge. He was studying at Columbia University, then at Forty-ninth Street. I rode all the way from City Hall Square in a dilatory horse car. My friend suggested that I get a room at his own boarding house in Sixtieth Street, and introduced me there with such hearty endorsement that I succeeded later in running up a bill of one hundred and twelve dollars. Almost his first case was collecting that one hundred and twelve dollars, as attorney for his landlady.

Before starting back on the long journey down

town, I asked if there was no other means of getting about in New York City than horse cars. For answer he took me to the middle of the road and pointed out the Elevated chalet down the cross street. Arrived at the ticket window, I demanded in my most sophisticated manner, "One fare to Astor House."

The man only glared, but he shoved a ticket through the window. I carefully deposited it in my vest pocket and hurried to the platform. I was soon aware that the man at the gate was addressing me, by the way he grabbed my arm.

"Ticket," he yelled.

"I have it, thank you."

"Well, *put* it in the box!" he roared. I looked all around, but saw no box. At the entrance was a sort of glass gate-post with a pump-handle attached, and I finally gathered from his gestures that he meant for me to put my ticket in this singular contrivance. I did so. The man worked the pump-handle up and down, the ticket disappeared down its maw, and I continued to watch breathlessly to see what else would happen. Meanwhile a train pulled in and out. However, it was not my train. It was an up-town train. I was on the wrong side and would have to go down and up the other steps, where I was admitted free on a nod across the platforms.

Thus it was that I began my first ride on the L.

My first job was obtained easily — far too easily for me to appreciate it — and abandoned as lightly. I now believed I was in the land where opportunity knocked often and so loudly that even the deafened could hear her. I was to be thoroughly undeceived. In a morning paper I found this advertisement: —

MALE HELP WANTED

Printer, all-round, to set type and run press. Must have references. Give full particulars and state salary.
Herald 33

Of all the many who certainly must have answered this advertisement — and I learned later how many there were out of work — I was probably the least qualified. But I was also probably the best letter-writer, at least for the kind of employer “Herald 33” proved to be. If he had been a printer instead of a cotton broker, he would have seen through my facility of expression and realized how limited was my experience. My references were good as to character, but they were from country printshops, and were suspiciously silent as to my ability as a pressman.

In a day or two I received an invitation to call at the offices of Hubbard, Price & Co., Cotton Exchange. The interview was with Theodore H. Price, and was carried on, by him, in the Southern language which I had never heard before and didn't

hear distinctly then. I have always had difficulty with the delightful speech of those born south of Mason and Dixon's line, and all through that interview I was painfully conscious I was not living up to my splendid letter. Nevertheless I was engaged, and immediately commissioned to buy a complete printing-office, to cost about two thousand dollars, and install it in one of the rooms of the Cotton Exchange Building. With this I was to print a daily cotton-letter and mail it to the firm's eighteen hundred correspondents scattered over the country, but chiefly in the South. The salary was twenty dollars a week: two dollars more than the union scale for a journeyman printer. I could hardly believe my luck.

Every day at three o'clock Mr. Price sat down in front of a dictaphone — which was as much of a novelty to me as the ticket-chopper's gate-box — and expressed his opinion of the course of the day's cotton market. The sheets came up to me as fast as they were typewritten, to be set up and run off on the Gordon jobber, and then with the aid of office boys, addressed, stamped, and mailed, which took until eight o'clock. I did not get up to my Sixtieth Street home until after nine, but on the other hand I did not need to report in Beaver Street until ten the next morning. Then I distributed yesterday's type,

cleaned the press, and got ready for the day's letter. On Friday there was also a longer weekly letter for a bigger list, to be printed and mailed, so I came earlier and stayed later. That was the whole job.

After a few weeks Mr. Price came to me with an idea. He was going to rent the adjoining room and have it lined with pigeon holes, eighteen hundred of them. Then I should print fifty envelopes for each address — ninety thousand in all — and store them in the pigeon holes, one to be taken from each pigeon hole for the day's mailing. After some hesitation I screwed up my courage to oppose this plan and tell him there was an easier way of accomplishing the same result. I explained what little I knew about addressing machines with which periodicals were mailed by printing the addresses from moving galleys of type. I showed him the great waste of time and material his plan would produce, and finally obtained permission to buy type, mailing-galleys, and an addressing machine. I was also allowed a printer to help with the extra work and a boy of my own. I was tremendously set up with my little establishment. But my triumph was short lived.

Mr. Price evidently felt that the printing department was now become so large it needed a head — that is, a clerical person who spoke his language,

to oversee things, receive his orders, and report to him. No doubt my deafness made communication more difficult than I suspected, and also, no doubt it was not seemly for a member of the firm to deal directly with help in a denim apron, with dirty hands and rolled-up sleeves. I conceived an instant dislike to the young man who came up one day and airily took charge. He was about my own age, and I learned in some way his pay was fifteen dollars a week. He was also a sprig of Danish nobility, and insisted on being addressed as Baron Rosencrantz, which confirmed Shakespeare's nomenclature but irritated me. Finally, he had no knowledge of printing whatever, and his demands were absurd and impossible. I did n't want anyone over me, least of all a man who was a Danish baron but not a printer, and who got less pay than I did. After all, there were plenty of jobs. Light come, light go. I tendered my resignation. It was accepted without the slightest regret, so far as I could see.

XVII

SHIFTS AND DEVICES

FOLLOWED a long period with no regular work. Punctually each morning I made one of a small group gathered around the door of some printing house which had advertised for help. Sometimes I was taken on; more often not. When I secured work it lasted but a few weeks at most. Thus it happened that I was for a month a compositor in the establishment of Harper and Brothers, where I set up copy for books by James Otis and William Dean Howells, touching with reverent fingers the hem of literature's skirts. Another time it was the Trow Press, where *Scribner's Magazine* was then printed. False pride induced me to tell a friend that I was now working on *Scribner's*, and he unexpectedly sought me at the offices of that magazine, where of course my name was unknown, and thus exposed my deceit. For a few nights I held down a case under the gilt dome of the New York *World*. Each newspaper had its own individual style, and fines of ten to fifty cents were assessed for failing to follow the rules. At the end of the first night I was fined more than I had earned.

It was evident the *World* did not owe me a living.

Those were the lean years of the nineties, when even the keen-eared had difficulty in hearing a prospective employer say, “I’ll take you on.” All sorts of possible openings were investigated, but deafness added to the difficulties of selling my services when interviews were secured — deafness, and a strong conviction that I had very little to sell. After every interview I felt an overwhelming sense of humiliation and defeat at the poor appearance I must have made, unwilling to own to my deafness, and thus seeming more stupid than I was.

One effort brought me in touch with the famous Claflin sisters, Tennie C. and Victoria, who were then publishing a paper called *The Humanitarian*. God knows why I should have answered their advertisement for an editor, but I did that very thing. They did not engage me, but Victoria’s daughter, Zula Maud, gave me an autographed copy of her mother’s book, *The Human Body the Temple of God*.

All sorts of makeshifts followed. Literally I lived by my wits, but they were poor wits and brought a poor living. One device was the so-called “Personal Intelligence Column” of the old *New York Herald*. One wrote a four-line verse on a current topic and sent it in. These were sandwiched between paragraphs on the difference between Centigrade and

Fahrenheit, and registrations at the *Herald's* Paris Bureau. On Tuesdays one cut out all of his own that had been printed, pasted them on a strip of paper with name and address written at the top, and handed it in at the cashier's window, who paid a dollar for each one that had been accepted. One verse would support life for more than a day.

A soap-maker who desired leaflets to wrap around his cakes of soap was another life-saver. The pay for a two-hundred-word tribute was eight dollars. But such windfalls were few and far between. The Want columns were studied each morning with meticulous care. No job seemed too remote for at least a speculative consideration. Thus it happened that a demand for a writer who could produce advertising copy in the Gillam-Wanamaker style — "send samples of your work" — caught my eye. The allusion was to the fresh individuality that Manly Gillam was giving the newspaper advertisements of the Wanamaker store in Philadelphia. I submitted my attempts to out-Gillam Gillam, and evidently succeeded, for while — as I learned later — Gillam himself had entered the contest, I got the job. Probably our respective demands in the way of remuneration had something to do with the result. At any rate, the connection did not last. The advertiser was a men's clothier, ambitious to enter the

advertising lists against Rogers Peet Company but without courage or conviction. There was no regular situation involved, merely the chance to write two or three pieces of copy a week at two or three dollars apiece, and in a few months this likewise flickered out. Either the Gillam style was n't the right prescription, or I was n't Gillam, or the clothing firm was too easily discouraged. At any rate it was decided to go back to the old barnstorming style of copy, for the production of which the firm's own personnel was sufficient.

The year that followed was the darkest I have ever known. I could not bring myself to write home for money because that would mean confession. Also I knew how little money there was. I was keenly aware of the appearance I must have presented at the few interviews I was now able to obtain. To the handicap of deafness was added that of undeniable shabbiness. It was so long since I had paid anything to my landlady that my heart sank with misgiving whenever I met her in the hall. The benches in the parks took on an air of sinister fascination. I studied their occupants, and wondered how wide was the gap between us. At the end of each discouraging day I crept back to my room after a meagre meal — if any — in a Dennett Surpassing Coffee room, the ones with the walls sprinkled with

Scripture texts. Slowly the conviction was forced on me that a deafened man, or at least this deafened man, could not make a living.

Among the few friends I had in New York was John Finley, graduated from my college a few years before, and now secretary of the Charity Organization Society before going on to fields of greater distinction and usefulness. I called on him at his office in one of the old-time mansions in University Place — not without some misgiving, in view of the lean and discouraging experiences of the past few weeks, that I might soon have to seek him in his official capacity. I asked him bluntly if he thought a deaf man could make a living in New York.

“I don’t see why not,” was his prompt answer. “There is a young man who calls now and then to see if I know of anything interesting for his department, ‘This Busy World,’ in *Harper’s Weekly*. He is deaf, as much so as you, I should think, but is making a real success in spite of his handicap. His name is Martin — E. S. Martin.”

That was the first I heard of Edward Sanford Martin. It is needless to say I read “This Busy World” religiously thereafter, and later followed him like a disciple to *Life*. I read everything he wrote. Although our respective offices were for

years within three blocks of each other, although for a long time the staff of *Life* and the staff of my own office ate their daily luncheons at adjoining tables in a neighboring hostelry, I never met him. I never wished to. It was enough for me that he was there. But no one knows the help and comfort I got each week from the sustained, assured, cheerful, sunny outlook that his writings revealed. The deaf, they say, are apt to be suspicious. But there was no suspicion in his views of men and things. An understanding charity informed them, and if he chanced upon anything bad or foolish, he cheerfully impaled it on a shaft of humor. I fancied that of all the thousands who read him regularly, few knew of his deafness. To them the sunniness of his editorials was but the natural expression of a clever writer with a good digestion, a clear conscience, and an unclouded life. But for me they had a special and particular message.

But those harrowing first months in New York were not wholly without compensations. I had two diversions that cost nothing, even in New York, and helped to fill the periods of enforced leisure between employments. One was reading, my old resource, which stood me in good stead now. The fine library of the Twenty-third Street Y. M. C. A. was open to me, and I obtained the privilege

of the library of Columbia University, through the good offices of my friend, the law student, and because I was — save the mark! — a college graduate.

I also forgot my troubles for long days at a time exploring the city, which was and still is for me a place of consummate interest. Generally I walked, for economic reasons, but now I know that the only way to see any city is to savor it slowly, giving it time to sink in, and have since in the same humble manner surprised the charm and penetrated the character of many Old World towns. For a few cents I could cross and recross the Hudson on the ferries, zigzagging from Fort Lee down to Communipaw, absorbed in the busy teeming water-life, so strangely alien and so self-contained. Thirty years ago full-rigged ships tied up along South Street, their long bowsprits reaching across the street and almost poking out the windows of the little red shipping-offices on the other side. From such ships strange foreign-looking merchandise was unloaded, in squat bulging hogsheads and neatly reticulated wicker panniers; and sometimes they were manned with dark-skinned crews which I hoped were Lascars. In the libraries I hunted up all books that dealt with New York, especially old New York, and then traced the history of the city in its old buildings, crooked streets, and place names.

One morning I awoke with the realization that I possessed not a cent. Also I recalled that my soap man owed me eight dollars; but I was on Sixtieth Street, and he was in Park Place, four miles away. It would take a nickel to reach him, and it was snowing. Nevertheless I got up, and without breakfast walked to his office. Even then, in my shiny, shabby suit and thin worn shoes soaked with water, I could not bring myself to say I had come for my money because I needed it sorely, so I asked about more work. He was n't putting out any new soap just then, but would let me hear from him later. As I got up to go, he said, "By the way, don't we owe you a small balance? I'll send it to you at the end of the month when the checks are made out." With a last effort at jauntiness, I told him to send it at his convenience.

Across City Hall Square there stood an establishment I had passed many times with foreboding. Over the door was a great gilt sign, bearing the one word "Simpson's," and beneath it three gilt balls. I had never been in such a place, but under the influence of hunger, discouragement, and defeat I went in and pawned my watch.

XVIII

I BECOME EDITOR OF A BUTCHER PAPER

ONE morning a fresh study of the Want columns, now an established daily ritual, unearthed the following:—

Editor wanted—for meat trade paper. Experience necessary; give references and state salary. 39 Herald

All I knew about meat was that one sometimes ate it, though even that experience had become rare; nevertheless, I answered the advertisement in my best manner, and received a curt, unprepossessing letter telling me to call. At the top of the sheet was the appalling name of the meat-trade paper, *The Butcher's Gazette and Sausage Journal*, and at the bottom the almost illegible signature of Hermann Klotz, the proprietor.

With some difficulty I found Mr. Klotz at his place of business in one of several old rookeries hiding beneath the arches of the Brooklyn Bridge, up what our British cousins call two pair of stairs. The offices consisted of two rooms, in one of which were a large, florid, weak-chinned bookkeeper, a pale, anæmic stenographer, and an overgrown office boy. In the other were a large iron safe and Mr. Klotz. He was a dark, stocky, ominous-looking man, who

received me with a glare of mingled ferocity and suspicion. I soon discovered he was slightly deaf, — the deaf are quick to divine such defects, — but his surly manner seemed to dare me to recognize it, and throughout the interview I bore the responsibility for his mistakes as well as my own, which must have made me appear even more stupid than usual. In his own peculiar way he uncovered my abject situation, and taking advantage of that and my deafness he beat me down — if I may use so strong a word for so weak a resistance. He seemed more concerned with the price at which I could be hired than my fitness for the position, and finally I found myself with considerable misgiving hired at twelve dollars a week instead of the twenty I had asked in my letter. It was an inglorious interview, but I had little fight left, and it was long since I had seen twelve dollars.

I soon learned how little ability was needed to fill the position, though some was required to outwit the proprietor and thereby keep it. The subordination with which I had begun my new career was maintained by the same tactics with which it had been inaugurated. Klotz bullied the whole staff, keeping us all in submission and willing to work for as little as possible, and we on our part soldiered and bluffed and lied. The bookkeeper was

especially expert at all manner of subterfuges and alibis, and often managed to beat the boss at his own game. The stenographer was an incompetent, frightened girl who received six dollars a week; the office boy, a blond giant who barely escaped simple-mindedness. There were two or three other employees, as I learned later. We were a pretty group.

Klotz was a German and a Jew. He had been a butcher, and at some meat-packing Olympic had won the world's record by knocking a calf on the head, stringing it up, and reducing it to brains, sweetbreads, and veal roasts in some incredibly short time — say, twenty-seven minutes. On the strength of this esoteric knowledge he had started his trade paper — one of many such publications once common, which batted on an industry like a fungus on a live tree, without contributing a single constructive gesture to justify their existence. Although he could barely write more than his own name, and that illegibly, he possessed an almost uncanny shrewdness and insight into the psychology of his fellow butchers, and he understood the butcher trade from skewers to sausage-casings. Elementary as was the work of editing his publication, he was unable to write even the simplest paragraph coherently, and so required the services of an editor

to reduce to some semblance of form the mass of cuttings from the clipping bureaus, market reports, and his own almost unintelligible notes. Besides, he could hire an editor for twelve dollars, and make more money soliciting advertisements and subscriptions. So he spent the day going the rounds, always turning up at the office just in time to nip in the bud the expectations of those who hoped to go at the regular closing-time. The presumption was that as he had been out all day no work had been done, and we were detained either to work or to prove to him we had worked, which took a long time in either case. Often it was eight o'clock before anyone was permitted to leave.

Such treatment kept us in a chronic state of insubordination, naturally, but it was insubordination held discreetly in check by fear of losing even such undesirable jobs. He seemed to know just how far he could go with his bullying without reaching the breaking point. The moment he stepped out of the office, voices were raised in loud murmurs and bold threats, which died away to a painful quietness when he returned. He had a habit of stopping on the doormat outside until the suspicious silence awakened by his returning footsteps had again given way to animated discussion. Then he would open the door with startling suddenness and stand

for a moment surveying the room with his suspicious glare. Whether he could hear anything through the transom over the door was a debated question never settled. We knew his tricks and stratagems and soon learned to discount them, but we were never able to overcome entirely the inexplicable panic his personality inspired. There was something psychological about his influence over us.

One potent device was to pay Tuesday for the week ending the previous Saturday. Thus no one could quit without forfeiting three days' pay. On pay day there was an unvaried ritual of which he never seemed to tire, which added its mite toward keeping the help submissive and grateful to get even their small salaries. He made no move to pay off until some one screwed up courage to ask for his money. Then opened the floodgate of profanity, abuse, and sarcasm. How was he to pay without money? Had we brought in any money this week? What had we done to earn our salaries? Every mistake or error was reviewed, and failures to accomplish even impossible things were cited to prove how worthless we all were. This farce was kept up sometimes till a late hour, and finally, having brought everyone to a proper degree of submission, he would take out a roll of bills "large enough," as the bookkeeper described it,

“to choke a hippopotamus,” and very reluctantly pay us our small stipends.

His invariable greeting to each of us as we came into the office on return from any errand was “Where *wuz* yuh?” delivered with emphasis and suspicion. It was a summons to explain and justify one’s absence. His door was always open and his desk commanded the door, and he peered from behind it like a watchful old spider. When he wanted anyone he shouted so loudly even I could hear it. He could always put one in the wrong by his questions and his manner of hurling them like accusations, and he in this way created and maintained an accomplished group of liars.

It was like working for some incredible character in Dickens — Daniel Quilp, for instance. And the same methods were practised on subscribers, advertisers, and creditors. It was believed in the office that he absented himself all day to avoid bill-collectors. He certainly managed to postpone payment of most obligations to the extreme last moment. If the bookkeeper by chance paid any bill, he stormed at him and threatened to deduct it from his pay. The pleasure of baiting creditors was reserved for his own amusement, and everyone who got money from him was forced to sit up and beg and roll over and perform all manner of degrading and humiliat-

ing tricks. We could not see that these things profited him any way. Of course he had to pay in the end, but it seemed a satisfaction to hold on to money as long as possible.

In spite of all, the paper prospered. It carried a large volume of advertising, and neither subscriber nor advertiser dared to quit, for the same reason that the staff continued to work for him. The advertisements were mostly of houses catering to the butcher trade with scales, blocks, cleavers, skewers, and sausage-casings, and consisted of cards, one-inch single-column — the smallest space they could get off with; there were hundreds of them. There were also a few full pages from packing-houses, refrigerator-manufacturers, and jobbers in butchers' supplies. An advertiser once in seemed in for life. The "ads" were set up, electrotyped, and run year after year without change, though the plates became so worn that not a single word was legible. However, it did not matter. Few subscribers ever opened their copies. These lay in their wrappers stacked up on the safe in the corner of the meat market, until thrown out.

Page advertisers were sometimes allowed to change copy. And the method by which a renewal was secured had elements of genius. Shortly before a page contract was about to expire, Klotz visited

his friends throughout the trade, not only in New York but all over the country, and induced them to write that advertiser, asking for catalogues, literature, or prices, and particularly mentioning the *Butcher's Gazette* as the inspiration of their inquiries. Then he called on the advertiser at the psychological moment when the advertising seemed to be bringing results, and almost invariably secured the renewal.

The most picturesque member of our staff was the foreign correspondent. In each issue of the *Gazette* were chatty on-the-spot letters written from the centres of meat interest: Smithfield Market, London; Les Halles, Paris; and somewhere in the cattle country of the Argentine, probably Buenos Aires. They were written by a Spanish Jew named Alvarez, who read and wrote fluently in English, French, and Spanish. He was familiar with the places he was supposed to write from, and supplied the atmosphere from memory and the facts from a bundle of foreign trade papers. The rest was imagination. These letters were the best things in the book. They were written on Monday. On Tuesday Alvarez collected his pay, and on Wednesday he turned up drunk, and proceeded to tell Klotz what he thought of him. It was a very unequal contest, for Alvarez had the gift of tongues, both foreign and profane, while Klotz could say nothing but, “All ri’,

Alvarez, all ri', I know. You're drunk. Gwan home and sleep it off. Tha's a good feller. Gwan home and sleep it off.'" Which, after renouncing Klotz and all his works, resigning his job, and heaping picturesque curses on his employer, Alvarez did — but always turned up promptly the following Monday for the next week's work. The one sure joy of the staff was hearing Alvarez paint an accurate, if incoherent, picture of Klotz. I did miss my hearing sometimes. Through the seventy-eight weeks of my connection with the establishment, this ceremony was seldom omitted.

One day in his perambulations Klotz saw hung up in some office an exhibit distributed by the principal manufacturer of butchers' supplies: a marvelous arrangement of wooden skewers, all sizes and shapes, in whorls and stars and symmetrical patterns against a background of crimson velvet, covered with glass and surrounded by a gilt frame. He had me write a hurt letter to the firm in his name. Why had he not been remembered? The display would make a good show in his office. Had n't he been a good friend of the manufacturer's, published complimentary notices, and all? The skewer-makers replied at once. They were very sorry he had been overlooked. It was unintentional. They appreciated the friendliness of the *Butcher's Gazette*,

and they were sending him the display by express.

I had been a little surprised at the letter of Klotz, which I wrote just as ordered. I could not conceive what he wanted of the thing. The office was full of such advertising material. But I was not left long in doubt. As soon as it arrived he sold the skewers to a butcher friend, and the frame to a picture dealer. He must have received for it almost as much as the manufacturer paid in expressage to get it to him.

Then there was the adventure of the *Standard Dictionary*. On the eve of a new edition of this useful work the publishers sent to all periodicals the customary announcement that an advance notice would be rewarded with a copy of the book when published. This excited him even more than wont. I was to write an editorial about the value to butchers of the dictionary and make it strong, which I did to the best of my ability, quoting the long extract from *Ivanhoe* where Gurth the swineherd instructs Wamba in the peculiar philology by which the Saxon animals ox, sheep, and calf become Norman beef, mutton, and veal when cooked, as cited under “beef” in the dictionary. I do not know whether he understood it, but his impatience for the arrival of the dictionary was painful. My piece was no good, he swore, or it would have been sent long

ago. Twice he asked me to inquire, and each time the publishers replied patiently that the work would be sent as soon as issued. I was puzzled by his longing for a dictionary, and wondered if he was stirred by any sense of his own shortcomings in the matter of language. At last the book arrived. He did not stop to take the wrappings off, but put it under his arm and hurried out to a secondhand book dealer, who gave him three dollars for it, as he proudly informed me later. For some inexplicable reason such treasure-trove seemed to please him more than the everyday dollars of the butchers who subscribed for his *Gazette*.

Why did I stay on? For one thing, it was apparently the only job I could get. All efforts to make a change proved fruitless. Deafness had produced in me what a more scientific age glibly describes as an inferiority complex. I had lost — or perhaps failed to acquire — confidence in myself. The world and I seemed so far apart. I lacked means of comparing myself with my contemporaries. They all seemed so much better equipped, so much surer of themselves. I knew my job was a mean and ridiculous farce, my employer incredible, impossible outside the pages of a book; but there I was clinging to my poor apology for a life-raft and afraid to strike out. On the other hand, no one else would

do the work and stand the abuse for the pay I got. Others left or were fired, and in time I was the dean of the staff. I succeeded in inching my salary along, dollar by dollar, until it reached twenty, taking advantage especially of those times when Klotz was about to start on one of his long predatory tours and must perforce leave the office in charge of someone. And in time the abuse fell on deaf ears, figuratively as well as literally. There were even moments when I took a certain grim pleasure in his idiosyncrasies.

In the course of time I wrung some degree of confidence from my strange employer. I do not mean that he trusted me, but he seemed to distrust me less. During the long periods when he was absent, scouring the country for subscriptions and advertising, I sat at his desk and received the cash and checks and deposited them. All functions of banking were mysteries to me. I had never had a bank account. The procedures Klotz taught me I followed religiously, one of which was to pin the checks and bills neatly together. Never shall I forget the irritated gesture with which the receiving teller used to pull that pin out and hurl it over his head. I thought that too was a part of banking, and never dreamed of departing from my instructions. If the cashier said anything derogatory, I did not hear it.

I had no authority to pay out money, and so had

the whole staff down on me each week for their pay. It was arranged that I should forward to Klotz the pay roll, and a requisition for the small amount of cash necessary to run the office, and he would send a check payable to me. But the check seldom arrived on time, and the need of money was always chronic in that group. One glorious week I exercised enough independence to pay off out of some unexpected cash that had come in from a creditor. This brought a furious letter from the field, but strange to say, no further consequences. When Klotz got back he had fresher things to quarrel about.

The twenty dollars a week he now paid me for my valuable services had begun to rankle, and he took immediate steps to bring about a reduction. "Bizniss is bad, very bad. I haint made expenses this trip. What was you doin' while I was gone? Did you make any money? Did you get any advertisin'? Did you go see Ferris, the ham man? Chust got out the paper, huh? Hell, that ain't no job! I can do that. I can't afford to pay you twenty when you won't do a single damn thing to bring in any money. You gotta take fifteen until things is better." But even a deaf worm will turn. I was again out of a job.

For two weeks I sought work diligently, but found nothing, not even a short term in a printshop.

It was the panic year. Next I received another curt note from Hermann Klotz. He had shrewdly surmised my situation. In spite of my aversion I went back and took up my old job at fifteen dollars a week. Again, by slow degrees, I worked up to twenty, and again was fired because I cost too much, and again returned at fifteen. Fifteen dollars appeared to be my net value. Meanwhile I combed the city to find other employment, at fifteen dollars a week, at anything that carried fewer humiliations.

Thus I came across a classified ad under

HELP WANTED, MALE

Editor for trade paper; must be good writer, correspondence, subscriptions, make-up and understand buying paper and estimate printing. 19 World

I answered it. There were few Helps Wanted in those times. Two days later the stentorian "Calkins" rang out as I entered. I went into the private office. "Where wuz yuh?" I explained I had been at the printer's. He made no comment, but took a letter from a pile lying on his desk and laid it open before me. It was my letter of application. He was the advertiser. The trade paper was the *Butcher's Gazette* that hung around my neck like the Ancient Mariner's albatross. I had perhaps been a little over-enthusiastic in listing my own accomplishments. He read them off one by one, punching the paper with his stubby forefinger.

“Buy paper! The hell you can. You show me. You get a lower price than we got now. Save printing bills! Huh! Write letters that’ll bring in advertisin’? Hell! You ain’t never done it yet. I got here one hundred letters. I can get all the damn college fellers I want for fifteen dollars. Now you chust gotta show me.”

I never showed him. I went to the nearest scalper’s office and bought the return half of a round-trip ticket issued on account of a Mystic Shriners’ convention, New York to Denver, for ten dollars. But I did not go to Denver. When the train reached the town where I grew up, I got off. “Back to nothing I set out from.” It was a complete circular tour.

XIX

THE SECOND HEGIRA

I was advertising manager of a department store in Peoria when the second opportunity came to go to New York. I had remained for a year under the parental roof after my first ill-starred attempt to find a foothold in the metropolis of the ambitious, leading a multifarious existence as printer, reporter, columnist, advertising man, and publisher, and all these occupations combined did not yield a complete living, even without the necessity of paying board. Peoria was the nearest large city, and its "biggest, best, and busiest" store had first taken over a bankrupt furniture-house and later a bookstore, which so widened the scope of its activities that the junior partner felt the time had come for him to get rid of the burden of writing the advertising by employing an advertising manager. There was no way of determining whether I was an advertising manager, but the elementary samples I had accumulated working for the merchants of my native town were sufficiently convincing to secure a contract for one year at nineteen dollars and twenty-three cents a week. When the senior partner came back from Europe he was not at all disposed to allow the

junior partner the luxury of an advertising manager, and so commanded him to get rid of me, which the junior partner conscientiously tried to do. But I had my contract and insisted on abiding by it, diffidently but desperately, although the junior partner promised to make it unpleasant for me if I did, in which it is no more than fair to state he succeeded. In time active antagonism gave way to something more endurable, but strange to say, my relations with the senior partner were cordial and friendly as long as I remained, while his associate continued to treat me with cold dislike, reminding me of David Copperfield's Spenlow & Jorkins. I am not the sort of person who does good work in a hostile atmosphere, but for some reason the copy I wrote under such adverse conditions really brought people to the store who bought goods. And so I bided my time, acquiring valuable experience and watching for the next chance. Which came about in this way: —

I thought highly enough of my stuff to gather a sheaf of it and send it to Charles Austin Bates, who had sat in judgment on my prize-winning carpet-sweeper advertisement five years before, of whose interesting activities in New York I had read from time to time in the advertising trade papers. I hoped for nothing more than a favorable comment

in some one of the numerous departments of advertising criticism he carried on. But the result was more consequential than that. It was a telegram which said succinctly, "If you will work for fifteen dollars a week, more if and when worth it, come to New York." There was no difficulty in getting free of my present connection. The invitation to resign had remained hospitably open. And the following Monday I was in New York.

It is quite evident that I was a very unscientific salesman of my own services. I jumped too quickly at an offer of fifteen dollars a week, and then, to crown all, arrived at the thirteenth floor of the Vanderbilt Building far too early. No one seemed to expect me. When my new employer finally arrived, he too apparently did not know what to do with me. He was a tall boyish-looking chap, with a black curly beard. He looked me over with the disarming smile for which he is famous, and suggested that I go out and have a look at New York and report next morning. I had no curiosity about New York; I had already seen it, and I did not want to look at it again except from the vantage of a permanent job. I was not yet familiar with the new business technique with which even high-priced men are hired with a casual "Hang up your hat, and I'll see if I can find something for you to

do'' — a technique I now practise myself. I left the office in something like dismay, with my eagerness to begin thrown back on my hands.

I found a boarding house in Cranberry Street, Brooklyn, where for three dollars and a half a week I obtained a small room, and a still smaller space at the large and crowded dinner-table. And Tuesday morning I was established in an equally small cubicle, adjoining the office of Mr. Bates, who in the meantime seemed to have lost his dubiety as to my disposal, but who still retained his smile — which was indeed one of his assets. I worked for that smile for five years.

The feeling with which I entered that little office and shut the door behind me was that of one long pursued by ravenous wolves, who has finally reached a haven of refuge. At last I was safe in a job demanding little contact with an unfriendly outside world, no more interviews with people who seemed uninterested and distant because I could not hear them. I had a job with a small but regular pay-envelope. I resolved to cling to that job like a limpet to a rock.

The work was hard but interesting. The shop was one of the very first organized to supply advertisers with copy. Although two or three free-lance writers had begun to introduce common-sense and

human interest into advertising, — men like Artemas Ward, John Powers, and Manly Gillam, — a shop where the manufacturer could go and buy anything from a small leaflet to a series of newspaper advertisements was a novelty, and we met the success that suppliers of long-felt wants are apt to meet. I say "we" advisedly, for while the pay was small, the opportunity was large. In a short time I had a chance to try my hand at nearly every form of advertising. And there was the comforting assurance that I dealt with no one but my employer. He had built up a small staff of writers whose work he directed, interpreting to his writers the needs of the advertisers and selling to the advertiser the work of the writers.

It was all very gratifying to a much battered self-esteem. I was apparently succeeding and was given more and more important work to do, and it thrilled me to learn what prices our customers paid for my modest efforts. Mr. Bates beamed on me, and I expanded in the warmth of his smile like a morning glory in the sun. He was very just and had the courage of his convictions about copy, so when, as sometimes happened, customers turned down my work, he encouraged me and insisted that it was still good. As I dealt only with him, and he possessed the knack of communicating with me, the

burden of impaired hearing was lightened to the point where it ceased to be a handicap in earning a living. Like a monk in his cell, I worked out my economic salvation oblivious of the world outside, except such glimpses of it as were brought to me by my employer.

One day I labored long and hard over a page advertisement of a corset, that was to be run in a magazine with a circulation of half a million. The responsibility was terrible. The mere cost of the space was three times my annual salary. I had not yet learned the important truth that an advertisement addressed to five hundred thousand women at a cost of three thousand dollars does not differ in any material way from one addressed to one woman at a cost of a one-cent postage stamp. When Mr. Bates read my copy, he leaned back and beamed at me with his engaging smile, and immediately I received a never-to-be-forgotten lesson in the art of writing.

“When you see the acrobatic act at a vaudeville show, you notice that the members of the Bandello Family come bouncing on to the stage and begin a series of bows: bows to the right, bows to the left, and bows in front. But the audience does n’t care for the bows. It wants them to get up on the trapeze and do their act. You take up too much

space in making bows. Now here" — he drew a blue pencil through two thirds of the copy — "is where you really begin. So let's cut out the genuflections."

About the same time I had another lesson, less gently put but equally valuable. In those days George P. Rowell, one of the pioneers in advertising, was owner of *Printers' Ink*, a tiny but lively trade journal of advertising, also of the *American Newspaper Directory*, the first systematic attempt to make a list of the newspapers and magazines of the country for the use of advertisers. In both of them he printed the advertising of publishers who desired to call their mediums to the attention of possible customers. He took his pay for this service in space in the newspapers, which he generally sold to his customers when he had any, and used it himself when he did not. Thus he decided to devote a certain amount of it to advertisements of *Printers' Ink*, and engaged my employer to prepare him some copy. This was also a swap, for Mr. Bates was writing stuff for the little magazine and taking his pay in space to advertise his own business; and this order for copy fell into the same category. It is only fair to say that the system of barter, which prevailed so much in the early days of advertising, has been superseded by a more businesslike method; but

thirty years ago it was difficult to establish the principle that space was really a commodity, and worth money.

Bates turned over to me the Rowell job, and I planned to knock their eyes out with my cleverness. Some of my stuff was in rhyme, and what was n't jingle was epigram. It was pretty nearly everything but advertising. What Bates thought of it I don't know, but he wrote across the top: "Dear Mr. Rowell, here is some stuff one of my young men has written." Back it came with commendable promptness, with the legend: "Dear Mr. Bates, one of your young men has written some damned bad stuff."

Since then, like Oliver Wendell Holmes, I have never dared to be as funny as I can.

XX

I AM INTRODUCED TO ART

MOST of our business was secured by advertising and correspondence. It was not often necessary for even Mr. Bates to have a personal interview. This was before the days of advertising built on facts gleaned from the field. It was enough for the time being that old threadbare sales-stories should be retold in fresh words. For such work I was not entirely without equipment. I had a storehouse of words, phrases, anecdotes, figures of speech, and analogies, gleaned from a long course of reading, never before used in business. Back in the Galesburg days I had adopted — and I think invented — a plan of pinning my advertisement to some bit of anecdote or allusion, which I twisted into a relation with my business message. “The Four Kinds of Women” was such an invention: a booklet for the local department store. An old Oriental saying lingered in my mind, which went something like this: —

Men are four.
He who knows not and knows not he knows not.
He is a fool. Shun him.
He who knows not and knows he knows not.
He is simple. Teach him.
He who knows and knows not he knows.
He is asleep. Wake him.
He who knows and knows he knows.
He is wise. Follow him.

I changed the men to women, and classified the customers of the store in respect to their knowledge of the bargains to be had there, according to the epigram, and the little book had an extraordinary success.

With this experience in mind, and remembering that the millionfold readers of the women's magazines are merely aggregations of Galesburgs, I ransacked my memory for old tales with morals, — Æsop, Epictetus, Lycurgus, Bacon, Franklin, — whose shrewd worldly wisdom could be applied to a selling instance just as aptly as to a moral instance, and introduced into advertising that form of teaching which is perhaps the oldest in the world — the fable or parable.

I had also another resource which served as mental capital for my new occupation. The town where I grew up was still a vivid series of pictures, its Main Street lined with stores — grocery, hardware, drug and dry goods stores, and other shops where goods were sold, the very same goods I was now trying to persuade people to buy, with the printed word. Whenever I wrote about tooth powder or toilet soap, there arose before my eyes Lescher's drug store with its black-and-white tiled floor, its bottles of colored water in the windows, its primitive unimaginative soda fountain, and Ed Lescher himself peering over the partition in front of the

prescription counter. The hardware store that was my touchstone for all the hardware stores in the country was the very one under whose ægis I had won my advertising spurs by capturing the carpet-sweeper man's prize. The people for whom I now wrote were these same people, who bought at just such stores all over the land. They were all the same as individuals, however much multiplied in number.

I had also my early predilection for the alphabet expressed in lettering or printing. During the long hours at the type case I had thought much and earnestly about the form printing should take to arrest the eye, be easy to read, and deliver its message without friction. I had now to consider pictures as well as print. I was innocent of any knowledge of composition and design. I did not know what made a page look the way I wanted it to look, but I was irresistibly attracted by a bit of good designing. There was no such thing as art in the town where I grew up. On the walls of the parlor at the little house in Monmouth Road there had hung from the earliest time two veritable oil paintings which father had bought from an itinerant vender. They were the kind that are painted in hundred-foot strips and then cut up in three-foot lengths. You could feel the paint with your finger.

The blobs of Chinese white that stood for sails on the small vessels puzzled me. They were the only paintings I had seen until I left home.

Another picture which hung in the sitting-room was a steel engraving. The subject was a child being saved from the sea by a dog. The dog was apparently the model for all dog-pictures of the period. It was the same shaggy, intelligent type that stood for dog in the schoolbook — the Newfoundland dog never found in Newfoundland, but only in childhood. He lay prone on the beach, partly in the water, the child lying across his forepaws, entirely dry. He had been waiting a long while apparently for some one to pat him on the head and say, "Good Fido!" The letters underneath spelled SAVED. The interest of the picture lay in two mysteries — unsolved to this day. Where did the dog's tail end, and the sea begin? And was that an eye lying there on the sand? The other day I ran across that engraving in an antique shop on Cape Cod, and my respect for the young critic went up. The wavy tail still faded away into the purling waters without a break, and that thing on the beach looked more like an eye than ever.

Other works of art that fed my imagination in those far-off days were the wreath of wax flowers under glass, the whatnot with its conch shells,

the hair tree, — an ingenious genealogical record wrought from the hair of three generations, on which I was a small tow-colored twig, — and the daguerreotypes of grandma and grandpa in plaster-moulded frames — grandpa fell and broke to smithereens at the very moment the original was carried across the threshold in his coffin. Then there was the crude perspective behind the pulpit of the Baptist Church; the child's gravestone in Hope Cemetery, carved in the form of a little bed; the panorama of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, painted on canvas and unrolled across the stage; and the working-model of the Strassburg Cathedral, for which school was always dismissed.

With such an apprenticeship, you can imagine what a deep impression was made on me by my first view of art. It took the form of an exhibition of the Pratt Institute School of Design, to which some friend had sent me a card. It was a very ordinary exhibition — the work of students applying design to imaginary book-covers, wall-paper, furniture, just such school work as one can witness in hundreds of places to-day. But it stirred me as I have seldom been stirred since.

Somehow I seemed to realize almost at once that I had discovered a new world, one open to me in spite of my deafness: the world of art — pictures,

sculpture, architecture, design, especially design; for though I learned in time enough about art to enjoy to some extent all its expressions and manifestations, I remained primarily a craftsman, and so found a new and intense enthusiasm in admiring man's skill in applying art to the things he uses. I read unceasingly in this new field. I visited museums and picture galleries. In later years, when I was so fortunate as to spend my vacations in Europe, the wood-carving, the wrought-iron work, the wonderful tracery in stone, the architecture, all the ways in which the mediæval craftsmen expressed their joy in their work, took on a meaning that kept me unflaggingly interested.

But there was another effect of the discovery of art. Here was what advertising needed and lacked: form, visualization, the attractiveness of color and design to strengthen its appeal to the eye. As soon as practicable, I enrolled in the night class in applied design.

Then came the struggle to apply design to our work. I was poorly equipped, with no manual dexterity, no background of art, nothing but a burning idea. There was no one to whom I could impart it with the hope of having it visualized. There were two men attached to our organization, typical commercial artists, who drew pictures when required,

dull, humdrum, spiritless affairs, hopelessly remote from the joyous, light-hearted sketches turned out by the students at Pratt. In those days no artist with any self-respect would dream of making a commercial design. Such work was left for the failures and has-beens, and their work was stodgy and labored. I could not convey to such men what I saw so clearly. I worked far into the night making my own crude layouts to introduce the poster idea, the eye-catching quality, into advertising art. My enthusiasm impressed my employer, and one day he said: —

“I have just hired a man who will do the sort of things you like.”

His name was George Ethridge. He had studied in Paris and among other things made a collection of French work — designs, posters, figures, compositions — that he thought might be useful. He showed them to me one day. They filled a large closet to the brim. He called it his art education, and explained the expression with a story. A medical student had spent three years taking notes of lectures, and then lost the whole lot from the bridge while crossing the Seine.

“My God!” he exclaimed. “There goes my whole education.”

The collection was useful. The drawings were

not copyrighted in this country, and sometimes designs were reproduced without change. I recall one, rather skittish but a good eye-catcher, that was used in our own advertisement. It would be innocuous now, but it brought strong objection from Mrs. Bates. I remember it because of what her husband said when I pointed out to him how easily he could justify it. His comment was: "It is quite evident, Mr. Calkins, that you are not married."

With Ethridge's help we soon had an art department, and began to do things in designing as epochal as we had done in copy. It was crude and primitive compared with to-day, but a remarkable advance for the time. The men were mostly newspaper artists, cartoonists, and others who had already learned to work in harness. The illustrators still held haughtily aloof. But the significant thing is that it was the first art department attached to an advertising agency, and as such introduced a great change in the practice of advertising.

It was through the new art manager that I joined my first club. Some artists were passing a paper to secure a charter and I was asked to put my name down. Thus I became a member of the National Arts Club. It secured a delightful little house in Thirty-Fourth Street, decorated by the members, with an open-air dining-room. I was inordinately

proud of this connection. Charles de Kay was a prime mover, and the Lamb Brothers, ecclesiastical designers, were active. It was planned to make it a small and intimate association, with a club table at which members were urged to dine. Around that table gathered many well-known artists, men I longed to know. But though often and cordially urged to join them, I continued to eat at my own table, my deafness and my diffidence overpowering my curiosity and desire for social intercourse.

I enjoyed the exhibitions, and even arranged some. The first showing of advertising art was held in the club under my auspices. I was made a governor, but resigned before my term expired. I could not continue on a board where I was expected to share responsibility without knowing what business was being transacted. Eventually I resigned from the club. I have joined many clubs since, and left some, in my search for the one I could use, and have at length settled down to the University, where I use the restaurant, the pool, and the library, especially the library, and where my social performance is limited to an occasional nod to the few members I know.

The small club of good fellowship is not for me, though that is the kind I am best fitted to enjoy.

XXI

SOCIAL LIFE OF A DEAF MAN

THE creation of an art department in our agency raised me to the position of a modest patron of the arts, for I had authority to buy work from outside artists for special purposes. Thus I came to give a commission to a clever fellow student at Pratt. Her name was Pamela Coleman Smith, and her drawings had a quaint simplicity and charm which was more unusual then than now. For ten dollars she made me a little poster of the Crow and the Pitcher, to illustrate Æsop's fable of that name, for which I had devised some advertising use. It was her first order, and led to further acquaintance, with the result that one evening she entertained a party of friends at our house with a dramatic performance as unusual in its way as her drawings.

She was born in Jamaica and had grown up under the care of negro nurses, who had taught her the strange folklore of their race. These tales she told in the words and with the intonations of the old colored mammies from whom she first heard them, interspersing them with crooning darky melodies, which heightened the weird and uncanny effect. I could not hear them, but I was extremely conscious

of the unusual picture she made while telling them — like one of her own drawings, for she wore a dress with voluminous skirts and many ruffles, with variegated strings of large beads looped around her neck. Seated on the floor with her skirts spread out, the only light a row of candles at the edge of her dress, she looked like some strange African deity. Her performance so impressed Ellen Terry on one of her visits to this country that she swept her back to England, where she made considerable success in both designing and storytelling. She became identified with that group of free spirits including Gordon Craig, William Horton, Lady Alyx Gregory, and W. B. Yeats, which produced *The Green Sheaf*, a precious publication that achieved only thirteen numbers, and is sometimes sold in auction rooms at a much appreciated price. H. W. Nevinson has a pleasant paragraph about her in his *Chances and Changes*, and mentions that she had negro blood — which I never heard, but which would account for her peculiar dramatic power.

I met Pamela again at a dinner in London given to Ellen Terry to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of her advent on the stage. There I saw also Polly Chase, who was once known as the Pink Pajama Girl, and who had become a sort of protégée of Sir James Barrie and was acting in some of his plays. I

am sure the lives of none of his heroines were any more fantastic than hers. She used to pose as a fashion model in the intervals between her engagements as a chorus girl. For almost the first use of photographic designs in advertising, I posed and took pictures of her for some work we had in hand at the time. One of these bore the caption, "A Live Wire." She was.

There were many other notables present, and the committee of arrangements had thoughtfully provided a labeled diagram, so that from our seats we could identify the illustrious. Gordon Craig was represented only by a bunch of fifty roses telegraphed from Florence, where he lived — as I was told — because he had so many creditors in London. Later I met him twice, but neither time did me any good, nor did such encounters throughout my whole lifetime. The great, and even the near-great, must be caught on the fly. They have no time to make themselves intelligible. Once in Florence I visited a famous binder to arrange for the proper dressing of a copy of Dante I had bought as a souvenir of my visit to his city, when there stalked into the shop a tall, picturesque individual, in a slouch hat, knickerbockers, and long cloak. He said something in Italian to the proprietor, who handed him a magnificently bound copy of a large book. Thinking, of

course, that he could not understand English, I said to my wife, “Look, Dollie, that is *The Mask*, Gordon Craig’s magazine.” Immediately he offered it to me for examination, saying, “Would you like to see it? Are you interested?” I murmured that I was interested in everything Gordon Craig did.

“Are you now? Well, I happen to be Gordon Craig.”

He gave me his card, and invited me to come and see him — which, of course, I never did. That was all there was to it; and it is typical of most such encounters with me. Even the brief interview recorded was possible only with the help of my wife. I could write a paper about famous people I have met and was unable to use, other than satisfy my curiosity as to how they looked. Some years later I attended an exhibition of miniature stage-settings at the Leicester Galleries in London, illustrating Gordon Craig’s theory of stage lighting, and was explaining to my wife what one of the models meant, — which I did not know, — when someone came up behind us and delivered an exposition on that particular model, which I did not hear. But it was again Gordon Craig, and he claimed he remembered meeting us in Florence.

I mention these slight incidents only to show what happened when I met or had a chance to meet

people whose work interested me tremendously: people who did things, about whom I had the liveliest curiosity. The interview ended where it began and led nowhere. Of course this applies to all contacts, illustrious or otherwise. I sat all of one week on a ship, studying H. G. Wells, without mustering resolution to accost him, because my wife said his enunciation was bad. It would n't have meant much to him, but it would have been an adventure for me. And so I fall back on imaginary conversations, like Landor, and I am beginning to believe that no one is so interesting as I imagine most people are.

The souvenirs of the Terry dinner were designed by a young man named James Pryde — or was it William Nicholson? On a long strip of paper was depicted Ellen Terry in every one of her numerous rôles. When some years before I was so much concerned with introducing art to advertising, I was much inspired by posters from England signed, Beggarstaff Brothers, which was the delightful firm name of Pryde and Nicholson. I collected them sedulously, and dandled them emulously in front of our art department, which, God knows, contained neither Prydes nor Nicholsons. I could say a lot about my efforts in those early days to utilize the art of Europe in American advertising, but this, as

it happens, is the story of a deafened man, and not a history of advertising.

Of course trips abroad did not come in the days of fifteen dollars a week, but these later incidents round out and complete earlier happenings in a way that gives one a sense of denouement. Everything one learns or experiences comes in handy sometime, and out of such is woven the texture of life. It is a rule in fiction that no character or incident should be introduced that is not to be used again later on, and it seems as if life also followed that plan. Everything that happened to me seems to be part of the plot and forwards the action, especially my deafness.

Deafness was the ever present influence. It made or marred my attempts to earn a living, it selected my friends for me, and determined what I was to enjoy of social life, what my amusements were to be. At first the only problem had been the practical one. How was I to live? Once that was solved, as it now appeared to be, I naturally reached out for recreation, for something to satisfy other sides of my nature. The world of art was a new acquisition. I explored it with my usual enthusiasm. Not only did it help me in my work, but it widened my resources outside the job. The Nimmo foundation of the Y. M. C. A. library comprised some twenty thousand books, if I remember rightly, on art, architec-

ture, sculpture, design, for the enjoyment of which no other sense was necessary than seeing, and some understanding. This training immensely increased the value of what I saw when I went abroad.

I was not able to use the theatre much, even when I could afford it, except entertainments that were of the nature of spectacles, of which Max Reinhardt's "Sumurun" was a magnificent example, and also a delightful pantomime I saw in Paris called "*Chands Habit*." I did sometimes try to get something out of plays where I was able to read the book in advance, but the only seats from which I could hear anything were the choice ones sold to the speculators, so this indulgence was too expensive in the earlier days.

The front seats at churches were almost as unobtainable. I tried to hear some of the more famous preachers. One of them was Dr. Duffield; his cousin lived in my native town, and I had promised Miss McCall, the Latin teacher who had done so much for me, to hear him. But it seemed that the front seats at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church were all taken by pew-owners, and I did not even try the seat in the far corner that the usher gave me. I fared much better at Plymouth Church, which was in the immediate neighborhood of Cranberry Street. As soon as I had whispered to the usher my great need for a front seat, he led me down to the second

from the front in the middle tier, right in front of the pulpit. From a brass plate I learned that it was the Strangers' Pew, left as a legacy to the church by Henry Ward Beecher. Doctor Abbott was a commanding figure, with his flowing beard and a certain eagle-like quality which made me think of St. John — not the gossamer, but the original author of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. In spite of his beard I heard him passing well; he had a ringing voice. The sermon was the first of that series on the apparent conflict between Genesis and the discoveries of science, and it was a revelation to me. Never had I known that a clergyman could take such a liberal stand and get away with it. It affected all my thinking from that time on, and I returned to hear the rest. After the sermon Doctor Abbott came down from the pulpit and directly to me, shook my hand, and made me welcome. He remarked on the close attention I seemed to pay. I explained how necessary it was that I should pay close attention. And then I told him how a book written by his father had made me a printer.

My admiration for Doctor Abbott began with that moment and I followed him with eager interest. I was astounded one night at the Arts Club to see him drinking a glass of wine, and later, one winter in Bermuda, at the races, the great social event of

those islands, to see him in the front row of the grandstand enjoying the spectacle like anyone else. It was a great thing to know that a minister could evidently be a human being. And sometime afterward I was engaged to prepare an advertising plan for the *Outlook*, and the letter of appreciation which Doctor Abbott wrote me was another little milestone.

When my pay was raised to twenty dollars I moved from the Cranberry Street boarding-house to a much better one on Columbia Heights, better in comforts, and more promising in material for friendships. I sat at the long table in the middle of the room, with the unattached, and at smaller tables around sat married couples and small families. I made no advances, but ate my meals in silence and studied my table companions, as was my custom in a new environment. On the day before Christmas I was feeling rather forlorn, as I was apt to at that season, when I was astonished by one of the matrons, whose bright face had already attracted me, taking the vacant seat beside me, and demanding a quarter.

“A quarter,” I cried, “What for?”

“To buy you a Christmas present with. We are going to have a tree to-night in our rooms, and we each contribute a quarter for our own presents. As

so many have engagements for the evening, the time for our spread is two A.M. I want a quarter, and I want you to come.”

Much impressed by this determined lady whose speech was so easy for me to understand, I gave her the quarter, and went to the party, and met my fellow boarders, many of whom became friends who helped me to wider vistas outside the boarding-house. Especially the woman who made the overtures, and her husband. They were people of a kind I had never met before. They talked with the utmost frankness about everything, without false shame or false modesty. She was expecting a baby and spoke of it as simply as if it already lay in her arms. Her aim was to keep herself in a happy frame of mind for its effect on the child. Her husband brought her flowers every day. I had never heard of prenatal influence. Some of the old cats in the house pretended to be scandalized, but I had never before realized what a beautiful thing maternity was. I was familiar with the slinking, whispering, furtive attitude of the small town. It meant much to me that there were people who looked at the great facts of life so simply and sincerely

In the course of time the young mother was taken to the hospital, and the next morning I woke up to see sticking beneath my door a slip of

paper which announced the news: — “Barbara arrived safely at four this morning. Alice is doing fine. WILL.”

Barbara justified all the preparation made for her, and was as sunny and healthy as a flower. Immediately after her arrival her parents moved to a house of their own, which for years was my second home.

The entire second floor of the boarding-house was occupied by a family named Russell. Mrs. Russell was charming, and I took much pleasure in talking with her, for she was sympathetic and expressive, which made it easy for me to hear her. Her husband interested me also, but my efforts to talk with him were snubbed so emphatically that it seemed something more than the customary aversion to talking with a deafened person. However, the others assured me that it was his manner toward all. Mrs. Russell shared in the simple festivities of the boarding-house, which her husband never did. He spent his days in a responsible position in connection with the yellowest of the yellow journals, and his evenings in studying eighteenth-century literature, in which he was well versed, and of which he had what I considered a large library. The contrast between his vocation and his avocation was piquant. He has since become well known as a freelance

writer, mainly in behalf of the under-dog in our social system, but even in that classification I seemed to have no interest for him. I mention these incidents because of the son Johnny, a boy about seven years old, whose home life I had so good an opportunity to observe. I had long lost track of them all when the other day I picked up a book entitled *Where the Pavement Ends*, grim, stark, amazing stories of the South Seas, of unusual power. The author was Johnny Russell — the boy of that Columbia Heights boarding-house.

Thus I laid the foundation of my social life. Most openings that came to me were fumbled, and I never learned what lay behind them. A deafened man is like Æsop's bat, neither animal nor bird, but having the disabilities of both, belonging neither to the hearing world nor to that of total deafness. He must make up for his handicap by some extraordinary social service, to move easily in a world where hearing is taken for granted. Thus his friends are confined to two classes: those thrown in contact with him by circumstances which make it necessary for them to communicate with him in some way, and those gifted with unusually clear speech and who never realize the full extent of his deafness. Now and then the two great desiderata were combined in a single individual — the knack of talking

to me without too much effort, and the temperament for congenial friendship.

Of such were a young couple at whose apartment I fell into the habit of spending my Sunday evenings. Both spoke with remarkable clearness, the man because he was an amateur dramatic reader, and his wife because she was just one of the blessed few who said everything she had to say as if it were of the utmost importance. They kept open house Sunday nights, and delighted in assembling apparently ill-assorted groups and welding them together into a social evening. The leaven was the ability of the host to talk with enthusiasm on almost every subject under the sun. His greatest interest was the stage; he had written several plays, and so actors and playwrights were frequent — not the greatest names, but many of intermediate magnitude, though there I met Bronson Howard, Henry Guy Carleton, Frederick Warde, Paul West, Otto Hauerbach, as well as janitors, manicure girls, Greek refugees, minor poets, and stenographers. As the host did most of the talking and had a way of giving me a résumé of the conversation from time to time, I kept in touch. To this couple I owe two things of the utmost importance in my life. It was from this young banker I finally obtained the capital necessary to set me up in business, and it was under the

auspices of these two friends that I met the lady who ultimately became my wife.

I had determined that just as soon as I became settled in the big city, with my anxiety about a livelihood for the time being lulled, I would investigate a means of mitigating my deafness about which I had heard from time to time, namely lip reading. I learned that it was taught at the Lexington Avenue Institute for the Deaf, and one day I went up to find out about it. I happened to arrive at the same time as a delegation of medical students from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and was grouped with them and ushered into a classroom in full swing, where we were seated together at one side of the platform. The instructor immediately suspended routine work to give us a little address of welcome and explanation, in the midst of which he suddenly stopped, and pointing at me said: —

“You are deaf, are you not?”

Somewhat puzzled, I nodded assent.

“Won’t you remain a few moments after class? I would like to speak with you.”

What had happened was that, in order to show us what visible speech was like, and also to mystify us a little, he had been speaking without voice, merely shaping the words with his lips, which he, of

course, could do very legibly. Lip reading is like handwriting in that it is sometimes as clear as print and again as illegible as Horace Greeley's famous chirography. Any lip-reader can read the good ones but it takes a lot of practice to read the bad ones. Like M. Jourdain and his prose, I had been unconsciously reading the lips all my life, as most deaf people do, and I had understood him, while the other visitors did not. My face had betrayed me, and Sherlock-Holmes-like, he deduced my deafness.

The instructor was Dwight Elmendorf, who has long since abandoned the work of teaching the deaf, to become a very successful traveler and lecturer, illustrating his talks with still and moving pictures, Burton-Holmes-like. It was arranged that I take a few private lessons from him in the theory of lip reading, which proved both interesting and pleasant, more because of the personality of the teacher than anything else. I did not become very expert, nor could I in so short a time, as lip-reading is like a language and takes years of practice, and even then some never attain it.

Later in my more prosperous years I took a longer course with Edward B. Nitchie, who was himself deaf, and who had established a school and written many of the accepted textbooks of the art. I am sorry now that I did not do more with it, but this

came at a time when making a living absorbed my energies, and also I had run across an electric device which helped me so much that it retarded systematic effort in the more arduous direction.

One of the pleasantest stories in the annals of deafness is the romance of Alexander Graham Bell.¹ He too had been a teacher in a school for the deaf, — his father was a well-known authority on phonetics, — and there fell in love with and married one of his pupils. Some years later he began a series of experiments to devise an electrical instrument by which his wife might perhaps hear. In the course of his investigations he accidentally invented the telephone, the magnitude of which overshadowed his original purpose. Some time after that, his assistant, Miller Reese Hutchinson, picked up the stitch where Dr. Bell had dropped it and produced a practical electrical hearing-device which I have always understood was the first. At any rate it was my first. And the first use I made of it was to talk with the lady who afterward became my wife.

¹ The publication of part of this record in the *Atlantic Monthly* brings out some illuminating footnotes. Thus Henry Lewis Bullen, the erudite librarian of the American Type Founders Typographic Library, writes that one of Dr. Bell's first pupils in lip-reading was James P. Burbank, who was wholly deaf, but nevertheless started the first publication devoted to the new interest of bicycle-riding, and on this periodical S. S. McClure obtained his first magazine experience. And McClure was once a student at the college where I vainly strove to connect with education, and founded there the college monthly magazine of which I was afterward editor, and finally was a client in a large way when my firm undertook the advertising of *McClure's Magazine* and books. Thus does life link up in a way that would seem forced in fiction.

XXII

ENTER RALPH HOLDEN

My life seems full of turning points, not realized at the time, but which have determined its course just as surely as the chance pebble alters the course of the brook that is on its way to become a river. No incident had more influence than the fact that a young man in the freight department of the Baltimore & Ohio at Philadelphia became dissatisfied with the outlook offered by a railroad life. One day he asked for a holiday and came to New York to look over the field. His first objective was publishing, and with this in mind he called at several of the magazine offices. Although he was a stranger without letters of introduction, he was treated with great consideration by all but two men — one of whom, by the irony of fate, later called on him on a similar errand: that is, seeking a job. While interviewing magazine publishers he learned that advertising was the new field of adventure, with the ultimate result that he took advantage of an opportunity to join the staff of the same organization with which I was working out my humble destiny. Thus I became acquainted with Ralph Holden.

It was my duty to welcome the newcomer to the

shop and show him the ropes, and so our acquaintance began at once. It is another instance of the selective power which deafness perpetually exercised over all my friendships that clear, distinct speech was one of his physical characteristics. If it had not been so, the course of history would have been changed. What was that about the length of Helen's nose — or Cleopatra's?" What a difference it would have made to me if, without changing any other quality, his manner of talking had been both inaudible and illegible! Like Frank Weitenkampf, for instance, the genial and well-informed curator of prints at the New York Public Library, with whom I would so much like to talk. Deafness supervised my education, selected my job, chose my friends, influenced my choice of a wife, and now figured in the making of my final business connection, hovering over my life like Fate in Greek tragedy, but on the whole behaving very well.

The ease with which I understood Ralph Holden led to long talks — during which we came to know one another better — about everything under the sun, but chiefly about ourselves and our prospects. He was a new type to me, the city-bred man, independent and fearless, mature and sophisticated, though younger than I, with little concern about what others thought of what he did, once he had

decided to his own satisfaction. He had no patience with the I-am-my-brother's-keeper doctrine. He did nothing and refrained from doing nothing because of possible influence on others. For him each tub must stand on its own bottom.

In an incredibly short time he had considered the whole advertising business and made up his mind about it. He talked and acted as if it were advertising that was on trial, not Ralph Holden. He was not at all impressed with the superior qualities of his employer, the advantages of having a job in such a wonderful place, as was I, and under the influence of his way of thinking I began for the first time in my life to readjust myself and acquire a new point of view of myself, my deafness, and my abilities.

To understand the effect on me of such ideas it must be remembered that my attitude toward my job was one of profound gratitude. I had at last found work I could do, to the apparent satisfaction of my boss, without the direful necessity of going out into the world and exposing my deafness and other shortcomings to strangers. Every business interview overwhelmed me with a sense of responsibility, greater than that with which I had approached the three-thousand-dollar advertisement. There at least the hazard was mental, as it was when I first set type — the type was in the case,

and I could find it; the ideas were in my head, and all I had to do was to hunt for them. I had begun to trust myself where all the conditions were under my control, as they were while I continued to work in my cubicle, like a hermit crab in his borrowed shell.

But as time went on I was forced by the course of events to meet people, strangers, business men, who desired to pay us money, on whom it was necessary to make a good impression: the impression of a keen, alert, wide-awake business man. I found it increasingly difficult to maintain the ignoble isolation in which I took such craven satisfaction. Even the fact that I could do and had done the work being discussed did not give me the self-confidence I needed. I said to myself, "I may not hear your question, but, by God, I do know the answer," just as in the spelling-tests of the school superintendent, I had consoled myself with the thought that though I could not hear the word, I could spell it.

When an interview became inevitable I watched its approach with dread. Over and over I rehearsed the imagined course of it as one undertakes a difficult conversation in a foreign tongue with which he is only partially familiar. The interviews left me exhausted, not with the work, but with the strain and worry of trying to hear, the fear of missing something of importance. I took advantage of

every device and subterfuge that would lessen my dependence on ears. Wherever possible I wrote a letter that would necessitate a reply in kind. I tried to have my interviews limited to tête-à-têtes, for I could generally make out with one protagonist, and I found most business men surprisingly amiable. Now and then one would take advantage of my deafness, and some interviews are humiliating to recall to this day; but it was largely my own fault in trying to disguise the extent of my deafness and pretending to understand when I did not. I was always watching for that expression which said, "Why do they send a deaf man to deal with me?" I was afraid of demanding sympathy where I wished so much to appear as a normal man, asking no odds, and meeting all comers on equal grounds. Of course I could not do it, and I delayed my progress for years by my attempt to bluff it through. For advertising work, of all work, cannot be done without frequent contact with the world.

So the cool and easy independence with which Ralph Holden regarded his job seemed amazing. It was really only the natural self-confidence of any normal young man with his way to make, who has never been compelled by circumstances to rate himself too cheaply. He felt no overwhelming debt of gratitude to his employer for his opportunity.

Indeed, he seemed of two opinions as to whether he would stay or not. He was able to measure himself with others, while I exaggerated the difficulties deafness placed in my way, overestimated the abilities of those around me, and correspondingly underestimated what little endowment I really possessed.

The events that led up to the next great change in my business life came with startling rapidity. First there was Ralph's growing discontent with his prospects in the situation where he was: a discontent to which I unwittingly added. In the course of four years I had advanced to what would now be called head of the copy department: that is, I had a staff of writers whose work I directed and supervised. It looked like an important job, and was. As Ralph and I became more intimate we discussed our personal affairs with greater frankness, and one day I told him what my salary was, which had by that time reached thirty-five dollars a week. This information was the last straw. He told me later that when he went home after his first visit to our office and told his wife about the people there, and described me and my job, his wife had asked him what he thought I got, and he had replied that it must be at least ten thousand a year. The contrast between that imaginary ten thousand and the actual thirty-

five set him to making new plans for the future, and those plans in our numerous discussions most frequently took the form of a business of our own.

Such a business would naturally be advertising, and as we took stock of our resources, material and intellectual, we came to the conclusion that we were what horsemen call a cross-matched team — that each was, as it were, the complement of the other. The work assigned to him in the shop was that of securing new business, finding and interviewing prospects, gathering information about them and discussing plans with them, while mine was that of turning the material thus gathered into advertising. One was selling, the other production. He was a business man with a business mind, accurate, exact, definite, qualified to talk terms, make arrangements, and report clearly and conscientiously, while I, concerned with the creative, imaginative, artistic side of the work, was apt to be vague and impatient of details. To put it briefly, Ralph contributed the brass tacks and I the red fire. Fortunately the deafness, if there must be deafness, was with the one who would from the nature of his work have the fewest contacts. More than that, we were already working together along just such lines. He brought new customers to the shop, and I, with the copy staff and the art department, was turning out the

advertising for them, in exactly the way — we told ourselves — we could do it in our own business. But not exactly, of course. We had plans of something very different from what we were doing: something that had not yet been done. We hoped to create a new epoch in the practice of advertising; and the memory of those long talks still thrills me. I had at last begun to live.

There was the question of capital. We had no idea how much we needed to start, but at any rate we had nothing. It was hard to save out of our small salaries, and for me it had been impossible. So ways and means had been discussed, at which Ralph was more proficient than I, though, as it happened, the first lead came through me. That last summer I spent my vacation at a camp in the New Hampshire mountains, owned by a Philadelphia insurance broker, who took paying guests who were congenial and broken-down missionaries and ministers who were not. He was a very shrewd and very religious business man who did not allow his business and his religion to mix, and was therefore successful in both. He asked me about my work, and I held forth in my usual dithyrambic style, waxing enthusiastic over the roseate future of advertising when it was done in the right way, until he wanted to know why I did not start out for myself.

I explained that I had even thought of that, and told him about Ralph and our plans, until by the time my two weeks were up he had agreed to finance us. At least, that was what he called it then; but after several conferences, during which it was decided that ten thousand dollars was a proper fund, he brought us his contract, which certainly disabused our minds of any idea that religion had an ameliorating effect on business. It was the sort of contract, I imagine, that Mephistopheles drew up for Faust to sign, delivering his soul to eternal bondage for the sake of a temporary advantage. Hard as were the terms, I am afraid we would have accepted them, so eager were we to put our plans to the touch, but by a stroke of luck Mephisto got cold feet and withdrew his "heads I win, tails you lose" offer.

The experience nerved us to start with two instead of ten thousand, and my half of that I borrowed from the banker friend, at whose Sunday night salon I had met so many interesting people.

XXIII

THE ADVENTURE OF BUSINESS

As head of the business-getting division of the establishment, Holden had been conducting a soliciting correspondence with Smiling Joe Kathrens, who was then advertising manager of the Pabst Brewing Company, though not yet "Smiling Joe." That sobriquet he earned or adopted later; but meanwhile there is now no Pabst Brewing Company making Milwaukee famous. When the negotiations reached the proper psychological point, Mr. Kathrens came to New York to discuss our handling his account, and was, according to procedure, referred to Holden. Holden invited him to lunch, and suggested that I should go with them, which I did.

During luncheon Mr. Kathrens began to quiz us. He was — or pretended to be — exercised because he had not been immediately ushered in to Mr. Bates.

"Who," he asked, "is Charles Austin Bates? Is there really such a person? What does he do? Who wrote the letters I have been answering all this time, signed with his name? Who will be responsible for the Pabst work if I decide to put my account here?" All these questions we answered

conscientiously, explaining our method of work, how large the business was, how C. A. B. could n't see everybody and do everything, and had to have representatives, in this instance us. To all of which he listened respectfully but skeptically, and finally he put it to us like this: —

“All right; I understand now. So the letters that brought me here were written by you, Ralph Holden. And the copy I shall get will be written by you, Earnest Calkins. What I want to know is, what in hell do you fellows need of Charles Austin Bates?”

Ralph had already answered Smiling Joe's question in his own mind, and he recalled it to mine quite sharply that night as we talked things over. He had been sparring with his employer about remuneration, — or rather, seeking some reassurance about future prospects, — while my dreams reached no further than fifty dollars a week and living an interesting bachelor life in rooms on Washington Square, with books and pictures, and a little writing on the side. I liked the work I was doing, my employer was appreciative and easy to get along with, I had managed to create a little environment which made my deafness less a burden than it would be in any new surroundings; to put it bluntly, I was afraid to let go. My grueling experiences in New York

a few years before hung over me like a nightmare.

Suddenly, in the midst of this divided state of mind, where I wavered like an aspen leaf on its stalk, Holden solved his problem and mine too, it seems, by resigning his position, thus putting it peremptorily up to me to make up my mind, which I did of course, resigning as soon afterward as was possible. While waiting for me to taper off, Ralph found an office at Twenty-Sixth Street, — he foresaw the new advertising centre would be uptown, — one room with two windows, had it divided with partitions arranged like a letter T into two private offices and a reception room, engaged an office boy and even secured a small account. The head of the ribbon department of a wholesale dry goods house had commissioned us to prepare a small folder, which Holden had written and delivered, and on it had collected fifteen dollars, the fee. On the last day of December I hurried up to the St. James Building, after finishing my final day's work downtown, and viewed with swelling pride the legend the painter had just finished lettering in neat gilt Roman on the ground-glass door: —

CALKINS & HOLDEN
ADVERTISING

Strewn over a table inside was the first day's receipts, changed to quarters and halves to make it look

large. It looked larger than any day's receipts since. Ralph and I shook hands over this silver-crowned table, and under such pleasant auspices the infant business was launched.

The old shop in the Vanderbilt Building contributed another factor to such success as I have made, besides my partner and my training, and that was and is the faithful secretary who has aided me in all my undertakings since. When I had attained the dignity of a personal stenographer, one was assigned to me from the reserve stock: a slender, attractive, red-headed girl, barely fourteen years old and scarcely six months out of the business college. Her one previous job had been with an advertising man who was also deaf — poor old Wolstan Dixey, who never found his Ralph Holden. She was given to me on the theory that if she was not very good, neither was I, who had scarcely ever dictated a letter; but we became better together by teaching each other, until when she decided to cast her fortunes with the infant business she was easily the best in the shop, not only as a rapid and accurate stenographer and typewriter, but for the far higher quality of using her mind. Her memory, and a more unusual faculty of not depending on it but verifying all doubtful points instead, have saved me from many humiliating mistakes; and in adver-

tising copy mistakes come home to roost. There are always critics in waiting to write to your clients about every slip. Again and again have I dictated quotations or figures or names from memory, only to find them changed in the transcript, and when I ask, "How did you know?" the answer is always, "I looked it up." Who was it said that all knowledge was merely knowing where to look for things? But the reason why Freda Demmler comes into this record is because it is the history of a deaf man, and as time passed and I became deafer I was compelled to depend on her ears. There is no telephone on my desk, and all my activities pass through her hands or ears. She is called upon to exercise tact and presence of mind, both of which she has, so I place her with my mother, with Miss McCall, the Latin teacher, with Ralph Holden, my partner, and with my wife, who have each in their ways helped me to work out a deafened man's destiny.

The new business had beginner's luck. Besides the ribbon merchant whose emolument had been so ostentatiously strewn for my benefit, there was the clothing manufacturer who called early to inquire our price for a series of trade-paper advertisements. When we told him, he spread out his hands in anguish and deprecation. Here he had hurried up as soon as he heard about us to encourage us with his

patronage, and now we were charging him as much as he had paid downtown. Such accounts were small, but they kept on coming with exciting frequency, and they totaled enough to keep the small establishment running. And the feeling was immense — the freedom, the sense of proprietorship, and the pride with which we viewed the firm name on our scant mail, on the printed literature, and on the ground-glass door.

Hardly had the curtain gone up on this set when John Patterson, the restless and aggressive creator of the National Cash Register, wrote asking me to call on him at his New York office. I remember there was some debate whether I should go or Holden, as obviously it meant an order, perhaps a big one; but there was something personal in the letter which made it seem wise for me to risk it, in spite of my deafness. What Patterson offered was not an order, but a job. He asked me to become advertising manager of his company at ten thousand a year. I explained that I had not only a new business but also a partner to whom I was pledged. He answered in his characteristic way. Squash the business and both come to Dayton. He would duplicate the salary, and we could share the job. As a matter of form I went back to consult Ralph, but I had no doubt of the answer. We refused without a mo-

ment's hesitation, though at the time we were each drawing, with some difficulty, thirty dollars a week from our own business.

Such was the glorious spirit in which we embarked on our enterprise.

The second year of an infant is proverbially a trying one, and an infant business is no exception. The thin stream of small orders showed signs of drying off, and it looked as if the slender pay-roll would be jeopardized if something did n't happen soon. Something did happen soon, and it was a significant instance of the casualness with which life seems to hang momentous events on trivial circumstances.

A solicitor for an obscure food-paper, who must have been as desperate as we were to seek business in such an unlikely spot, called one day and, with the obvious intent of making conversation, asked me if I had not been responsible for the Norka Malted Oats campaign. Now I had been responsible. It was one of the big jobs done in a previous incarnation as an employee of Charles Austin Bates; it might have been running yet if the owner of that business had not one night in a melancholy moment drowned himself in the pool in front of his factory. As this tragedy could scarcely be attributed to my copy, I truthfully answered in the affirmative.

“Yes,” I said, “I did it. What of it?”

"Oh, nothing much. Do you know Alfred Rose?"

"Only by reputation."

"Well, I was in his office yesterday, and he had that Norka broadside spread out on his desk. Maybe he is thinking of doing something. You might write him."

I did write him that very day, as soon as the solicitor had gone. I told him that here were two young chaps with a new idea about advertising. ("Two men with an idea" our prospectus had acclaimed; two men with one idea between them, our competitors jeered.) We were ready to take hold of anything promising; we were only a stone's throw from his office; we hoped he would bear us in mind; and we remained his hopefully.

The answer was a telephone call inviting me to come over. In accord with the division of labor made necessary by my deafness, it was Holden who went. He came back with a small order, a series of newspaper advertisements for a horse-feed. Never before or since has a job given me more pleasure and satisfaction. We had discovered an artist whose ability to draw silhouettes amounted to genius, and his pictures added just the right touch of display, together with a most engaging humor to carry the sober utility of the text beneath. Alfred Rose exhibited his good judgment by approving them as

they stood, and forwarded them to his principal in Buffalo, who turned out to be not only his brother-in-law but one of the first and by far the most brilliant of a long dynasty of breakfast-food kings. Edward Ellsworth owned two companies making cereal foods. The horse-feed was a by-product of one of them. He had other and bigger plans. That set of silhouette advertisements stimulated him like a stone thrown into the big geyser. He began to spout orders that kept the firm busy for years.

Soon a letter came addressing us with such marked consideration, and so explicitly recognizing the professional side of our work, that it added to our complacency and excited our highest expectations. The two members of the firm, the letter ran, were to take a certain specified night train to Buffalo, engaging a drawing-room, and go on arrival to the Iroquois, secure a room with a bath, make ourselves as comfortable as possible after our night on the sleeper, and report to him at the office of the H-O Company at ten o'clock for a consultation, eventually rendering a bill for all expenses and for whatever fee we charged for a day of our time.

To say this was unusual is to put it mildly. We would gladly have paid our own expenses and given our time for a chance to talk to Ellsworth about advertising. We had no regular fee. Such a con-

tingency had not yet arisen in our business career. We spent some pleasant hours on our way to Buffalo discussing what it ought to be. We followed instructions religiously and enjoyed the trip immensely. It was the first time I had ever occupied a drawing-room.

We found Mr. Ellsworth more delightful than his letter. He belonged to that class of business men — too rare even yet — gifted with vision, unhampered by conventions, with a certain almost boyish delight and enthusiasm in doing new things. He was president of two companies, one of which made Hornby's Oats, better known as H-O, and the other a new flaked food called Force. His immediate concern was a newspaper campaign for H-O, to have the eye-catching, unusual, whimsical touch of the horse-feed advertisements which had introduced us to him. No commission could have pleased us better.

We went to work and produced a series that still, with all the advance made in the art, would be today a noteworthy example of pleasant, agreeable, insinuating display. The package of the cereal bore a quaint old woodcut of Oliver Twist asking the beadle for more. We took that as the motif of our designs, and Walter Fawcett, the silhouettist, translated Oliver and the beadle into a series of

delightful borders and backgrounds for the text. In a slightly different way they were every bit as good as the horse-feed advertisements, and from the modern and technical selling point of view they were even better advertising.

As we worked with Mr. Ellsworth, interesting phases of his character and especially his unconventional methods developed. Never had we known a business man like this, who played with advertising as if it were a game of chance, who plunged on an idea like a gambler on a lucky number. His decisions were made offhand. We carried an armful of Fawcett's drawings up to his hotel and he spread them out on the floor, and walked about, pointing with his toe, saying, "This, and this, and this, not that, but this," and so on, and in five minutes passed forty designs. Then, briskly: —

"Now I want to know just how they will come out in the newspapers. What morning paper has the lowest rate for space?"

"The Morning *Telegraph*."

"Put that one in the *Telegraph* to-morrow morning. I will buy a copy, and telephone you right after breakfast."

Which was done. As soon as H-O was running along nicely, we took up Force. In place of the silhouette we used the jingle. Let no modern,

efficient advertising man sniff at this old-fashioned humble record. What we did in those days was fresh and new then as any modern development is now. Ellsworth had an advertising manager named Hunter, who had bought from two young misses a picture and a rhyme which described how Jim Dumps was transformed, by eating Force, into Sunny Jim. Out of this was fashioned a campaign which made Sunny Jim an international character. On billboards, in street cars, and in magazines and newspapers the changes were rung on this story. I wrote hundreds of the jingles myself, and when we ran down we enlisted the aid of well-known writers of light verse — Oliver Herford, Caroline Wells, and Madison Cawein, among others. For the illustrations we adopted a curious device. Ellsworth was always a stickler for good printing-qualities. He liked the silhouettes because they showed up well. The Sunny Jim pictures were line drawings, and it was impossible then to find an artist whose line reproduced well under the conditions of newspaper printing, and who had at the same time the requisite humor for the illustrations. So two artists made the pictures. Sewell Collins drew in pencil his own exuberant fancies, and Earl Horter did them over in ink with his marvelous clean simple line. Soon the whole English-speaking world had

added our Sunny Jim to its gallery of portraits.

Followed in quick succession advertising for other products and by-products, evolved from the restless mind of Ellsworth: self-rising flours, pancake mixtures, new cereals, for all of which he wanted sensational, unconventional advertising. For one we invented the Kinderbeasts — a set of ten animals dissected into squares, disks, triangles, and oblongs, offering no possible suggestion of the beast which they composed. These were put one in each package, and prizes of watches offered for sets of ten correctly put together. The odds in favor of the bank lay in the fact that the hippopotamus was packed in fewer cases than the other nine, so soon the whole juvenile world was ringing with the query, “Who’s got the hippopotamus?” In spite of this disadvantage, thousands of watches were distributed.

With all these apparent successes, something was lacking. The sales did not keep pace with the advertising expenditure. No sooner had one thing made good, than all the profits were thrown on the board on another chance. And not all the ventures were successes. Soon there were whispers about the solvency of the two companies, which caused acute anxiety in a small office in the St. James Building. The whispers grew. A bill for fifty thousand dollars’

worth of watches had not been paid. What should we do? What could we do? We held many anxious conferences, and finally we drafted a letter over which we sweat blood for days. We were a new house, we said, with very limited capital. A delay in paying even one month's bill at the rate we were running would wipe us off the map. We hated to ask a favor, and such a favor, of a man who had been so liberal with us, and for whom it had been both pleasant and profitable to work, but he must see how we were situated, how necessary it was to be able to pay our bills immediately, and to have the money to pay them. And so, would it not be possible to let us have the money — for the space we bought — in advance of placing the advertising?

Ellsworth never answered the letter. He transferred the account to another agency by telegraph. He passed us on the street a week later without a sign of recognition. We had lost a friend and a customer, one who had taught us much and allowed us to learn much at his expense. We felt this keenly, but the event seemed to justify our action. In about forty days the business failed and was taken over by its creditors.

The inimical part deafness plays in life can best be measured by what might be called its tragedies:

opportunities missed, or inadequately utilized through lack of so simple an accomplishment as hearing. Naturally there were social disappointments as well as business defeats, but while the former scarred my pride as much as the latter, they were not so easy to measure in material terms. Social intercourse could be and was dispensed with when necessary, but it was essential I should be diligent about my business, and follow as far as permitted such openings as fate offered. The delicate negotiations which lead to a desirable business connection must be conducted by ears keen enough to hear what is not said, but which may be implied by tone, inflection, hesitation; to sense yielding not admitted to itself — no work for a deaf man, even if there were not a further drawback. The prospect is conscious that the man who hears him so imperfectly is also the man who will act for him in a capacity which requires hearing as a primary qualification. The deaf salesman selling goods has only one of these hurdles. At least the goods he sells are not deaf. But the deaf advertising man is selling himself.

I do not recommend my trade to a deaf man. If it is urged that I have apparently succeeded in it, I shall be forced to confess that my success, such as it is, has been due to good luck. I spent the first

twenty-three years, the formative, impressionable years of my life in a small town of the West — a town that was in every way a type, a microcosm, of all towns between the Alleghanies and the Rockies. That stored-up experience has been useful.

And advertising work was different when I began from what it has become. It was simpler, easier. It could to some extent be evolved from the inner consciousness. To-day it is complex, highly competitive, and particularly is it the product of an infinite number of contacts with human beings. Above all things must the latter-day advertising man know his fellow men with the kind of knowledge that comes only from unlimited intercourse. Hearing is in the highest degree necessary.

And finally, I have been fortunate in my associates. They have made it possible for me to do my work. They have supplemented me with their ears and enabled me to use to the best advantage such equipment as I have. But I know I am not so good an advertising man as I should be, could I hear the talk of the world. Or am I? Perhaps such accomplishments as I possess have been nursed by deafness, and would have been dissipated by a wider opportunity offered by hearing.

After all, music is produced by muting the strings as well as by striking them.

When our work followed its natural course, the new accounts flushed and brought down by those with hearing, and information gathered by others similarly equipped, and I came into it only where I was best fitted to function, I was in my element and felt truly that I was not compelled to undertake anything beyond my strength. But now and then came an opening peculiarly mine, which must be handled, if handled at all, by me. Sometimes I was equal to it, and sometimes not. The list of humiliating defeats is sufficiently long to keep me humble. One comparatively recent will serve as the example of all that side of my life.

On a ship going to France my wife and I made the acquaintance of a delightful couple — both artists — going back to Paris, the scene of their romance, when they were students in the schools there, he a young man with no means, she the daughter of a wealthy man — now successful in their respective lines and bound for a vacation in the land of their art. My wife conducted the preliminaries as is her wont, for the casual contacts by which congenial people find one another on shipboard and elsewhere are denied me, but I share in all her finds. The acquaintance begun on the water continued on land, and was kept up after the return to this country, though they lived in a distant city. They visited

from time to time at her brother's home, which was near mine, and thus it came about that I met the brother under the most favorable auspices.

He was the head of one of the country's basic industries, making a product bought by nearly everyone, a company with resources so vast that its capitalization is represented by an interminable row of ciphers reaching away in distant perspective, with plants scattered all over the map, and a suite of offices in one of the downtown skyscrapers, in which walnut furniture and mouse-gray filling on the floors almost disguised the fact that business was done in them. The president of this great business was unusually easy for me to talk with, as he was informal and simple and was used to talking distinctly, for his father was deaf, which also accounts for the fact that I got on so well with the sister. We visited each other's houses, and I debated with myself the propriety of discussing with him the question of advertising.

When the sister urged me to get acquainted with her brother, she emphasized that side of the connection. He ought, she said, to interest me from the business angle. She was a very practical lady for an artist. There was no need to tell me what a dazzling prospect the president of such an organization might easily be. So I put the matter to him frankly, and

asked permission to come to his office and tell him about our work, which permission was cordially granted. Here then was the ideal opening, one that would be rated one hundred per cent in any book on salesmanship: a man in the position to do a large amount of advertising, with whom I had previous acquaintance, who knew of my defective hearing and who was not bothered by such a condition, and moreover a man of cordial, sympathetic disposition, to whom it was the easiest thing in the world to talk.

So I called on him at his sumptuous offices and was admitted without any of that chilling delay which takes the edge off so many well-prepared presentations. There is no denying that I was nervous. I never made a business call in my life that there was not something very like panic in my heart. I could go to this man's house, dine at his table, and feel that nothing more was at stake than my social reputation — which was n't so much anyway — and have my confusions and aberrations covered up by my wife, and get away with it. I had buried all hopes of being a brilliant conversationist long ago, but I still had the obligation of being an astute business man in my own line. It is a very different thing to talk to a man as a guest in his house, from talking to that same man across a

plate-glass-topped desk in his office. I had insisted that the basis of our interview should be strictly a business one. Even then I had misgivings about the wisdom of seeking the interview at all, of using the acquaintance that chance had thrown in my way to secure an audience I could not have gotten otherwise.

But on the other hand the prospect was an alluring one. I knew that in the logical course of events this company would be advertising at the rate of a million dollars a year. I do not think the president knew this. I believe he was sincere when he told me that the amount of advertising they did was negligible, and that they had no intention of increasing it. I devoted the interview to two objectives: permission to make an investigation of the business in order to show him the great possibility that existed, and an opportunity to introduce several of my associates, so that the reputation of my firm with him might not rest solely on my halting efforts. He did not take kindly to the first suggestion, but insisted he would be glad to meet my partner, and others from our organization. But he would not make at that time an appointment for the purpose, and he never did make one.

I sensed failure before I had gone far. I did not seem able to say the right thing. I am not sure yet

just what he did say about many of the things discussed. I failed to interest him in the subject I was more interested in than anything in the world: his business, and what could be done with it. Somewhere between us the vital spark of the interview was lost. I realized before I left that it was a mistake to have come alone. There were currents, influences, arguments, conditions I did not fully grasp and therefore did not cope with, loose ends that were not taken up. The difficulty of talking at all, of following the conversation, absorbed all my energies. I seemed to have no brain left over to think with. I got no clear picture of his state of mind. He was affable, friendly, cordial, but somehow inaccessible. I left his office realizing that I had failed completely. I tried several times to arrange other interviews, without success. I never saw him again.

But less than a year after that heartbreaking experience, his company made the change in its policy that I had foreseen and tried to tell him about, and launched into a real campaign of advertising, on a scale as vast as I had prophesied. I then realized how complete had been my failure. It will sharpen the point to this incident if I am allowed to say here that the advertising his company finally bought was inferior to what I had tried to sell him.

In other words, there was no flaw in my goods; it was the salesmanship that was lacking. It was a chance that comes seldom, it depended entirely on me, and I was unequal to it. There were other experiences like this, some even more humiliating, but this stands out, not only because of the magnificence of the opportunity but also because the conditions were unusually favorable.

The history of the firm was composed of just such happenings, a series of adventures, out of which we gradually built up a business that supported us and in time supplied something more than the necessities of life. It worked out very well. The work divided naturally, so that my ears were not often compelled to be the sole dependence of the shop, and when I was necessary, the interview was so staged that I was able to do what was expected of me without blunders. But for the most part I worked in the office, while Ralph saw visitors or scoured the country, and between us we were creating a technique, or a precedent, or whatever it is that pioneers do, which was to exercise some influence over all organizations that came later, and compel the making over of some of the older houses that preceded us.

XXIV

DIVERSIONS OF A DEAF MAN

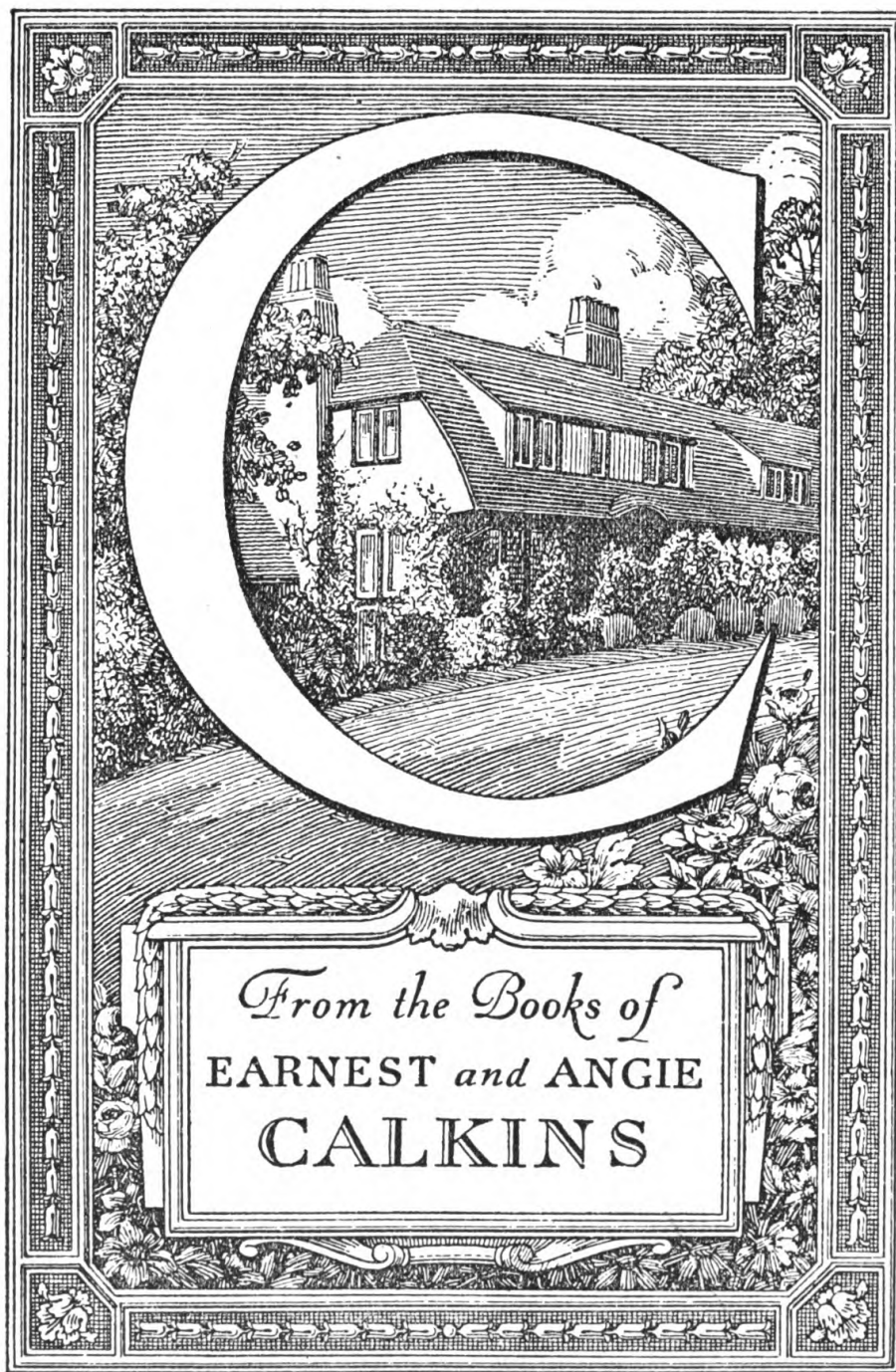
THE fact that I was partner in a real business, however small, gave me a standing in my little social world; the doubts and misgivings that beset me began to fall away, and as time wore on and my income reached the point where I was able to use it for something more than sustaining life, I began to look about for entertainment and recreation permitted to one whose stopped ears precluded most of the obvious distractions. But the effect of achieving something, however humble, wrought a transformation in my soul. At last the great question put to me at the very beginning was answered. Life was worth while; I could account for myself in it; and the scars left by the *Butcher's Gazette* healed over. At last, at the age of thirty-one, I had begun to live.

At first and for a long time I endeavored to be a part of the lively, bustling, hearing world around me. I attended meetings and conventions and served on committees and boards. With the fresh energy that my new position gave me I tried to ignore my deafness, override it, and accept all social and business openings. But in spite of me, my ears exercised their unconscious selection. One by one I stemmed off the

interests which depended upon hearing, and followed with enthusiasm the ones where a good eye and a receptive mind were all that was required. Of these the principal ones were books, art, travel, and a home that would be at once a place to live, a theatre for the diversions of a deaf man, and an expression as far as possible of a desire for something beautiful.

As soon as the business was on its feet I married me a wife, and immediately we began to plan and build the place that was to absorb so much of my interest for the next fifteen years. And in each of these enterprises all of the enthusiasms which deafness had engendered found play. The home made possible a library, which had been an ambition since the day when the first small shelf in my bedroom at the little house in Monmouth Road held my first stock of individually owned books. The selection of books was stimulated by my different interests; the library grew out of my needs, and reflected my progress. I became acquainted with the old-book shops, and immediately added an unfailing amusement by which a deafened man can while away pleasant hours in any city. For a long time there have been few book auctions in New York at which I am not represented by a few modest bids, and slowly my shelves filled, not with collectors'

rarities, but just books. I have never been able to acquire the collector's attitude. To me a book's appeal is still intrinsic, rather than extrinsic. I still buy books primarily to read and reread; but because I am a printer and a bookbinder, with a passion for beautiful print and paper, I can never be indifferent to the way a book is made. I do not enjoy reading a wretchedly made book, however enthralling. And so some of my books are beautifully printed, and many of them are about printing and the arts and trades associated with printing: lettering, binding, illustration. I started life with a predilection for the alphabet, and I have several score of books about alphabets. Maps continue to appeal. There is a good-sized section of travel books, an equally large one devoted to gardening, with such interesting side-lines as bees, chickens, dogs, and birds. Art is represented largely by architecture, landscape gardening, and applied design, with a lot of those practical *How To* — books. There is the nucleus of a collection on ancient ships, and the rest is selected from that part of the world's literature which I find interesting. Oliver Wendell Holmes says every library should be complete on one subject, if only the history of pin-heads. My library is far from complete, but it is more nearly complete on the subject of a deaf man's diversions



THE BOOKPLATE SHOWS THE HOME

than on anything else. It is a microcosm of the things that interest me most.

The first book-auction I ever attended was when the Hoe Library was dispersed at the Anderson Galleries. Then I found out that at the public exhibitions preceding such sales one could inspect rare and scarce books — Caxtons, Elzevirs, first editions, the Gutenberg Bible, the First Folio — to better advantage and with less red-tape than in any public library. Unfortunately I cannot get much entertainment out of the sales themselves. I miss the dramatic quality because I do not hear the bids. To get the spirit, the tense moments, and the entertaining by-play, one needs ears. So I content myself with inspecting the books, — especially those I can never hope to own, — and make out my list of bids, of which, even at my low limit, a certain percentage is added to the shelves in my library. As the books I buy are not rare but only scarce because out of print, they come up again and again and so I have more than one chance. There are many sales which do not interest bibliophiles or the big dealers, where one can secure desirable books for much less than they are really worth.

But aside from the acquisition of books, the interest ranks high as an amusement. One acquires a little knowledge of bibliography, with its mys-

terious vocabulary, such as "points," "collation," and "condition," and gets a glimpse of the vast business in old and out-of-print books that goes on all the while. He learns that the library of the average collector has become so standardized that auction catalogues show the same familiar items over and over: the comic histories of England and Rome by à-Becket, because of the Leech pictures; Dickens and Thackeray in monthly parts, with the right collection of advertisements (the "points," as collectors say); sets of sporting novels like Surtees; colored-print books such as Rowlandson and Cruikshank, and first editions of those peculiar and abnormal authors who have always appealed to collectors, Blake, Shelley, Keats, Poe, Oscar Wilde, Whistler, and Stevenson. And then there is that large field known as Americana, which is fashionable now — there are fashions in book-collecting. This appeals without tempting one to participate.

The catalogues are very revealing. One can recognize at a glance the collection of a bibliophile who collects for collecting's sake, as compared with the library of a book-lover. Not one book-collector in a hundred buys books because he wants to read them, but only to secure something some one else wants, and made valuable because the convention has been established that this is a collector's book.

While I use the complex machine which has been set in motion for the benefit of book-collectors, I have used it for the purpose of creating a deaf reader's library.

The art of travel is one thing that is helped by deafness, for travel is an art, and few who practise it practise it skillfully, because of lack of the preparation which the deafened must make. The deaf man has learned to leave nothing to the chance of questioning porters and commissionaires, and the uninforming monologue of guides and vergers. In the course of his preparations he learns much more that is missed altogether, because it is not at all the sort of thing Bædeker stars, or even mentions. The very first thing is to know where you want to go, what you want to see, and to select intelligently; but after that comes looking at a place from a background of history or legend, which adds to whatever there is for the eye a mental pleasure also. To become steeped in a locality, as it were. One soon learns that the things one ought to see are not the things to see at all, and one learns the even greater lesson of not trying to see very much. The great truth about foreign lands, or even domestic lands, is that there is so much, — once one knows how to look for it, and how to see it, — that a little goes a great way. What is the use of making

a holiday of the whole map of Europe, when a small piece of Sicily or Devonshire or Brittany will supply a better one on better terms? It is pleasanter and less fatiguing to see a great deal of a small country than a little of a large one. I do not think I should have found this out, or found it out so thoroughly, if I had n't been deaf.

When we started our advertising business, we told the world that it was our purpose to do many things for a few clients rather than a few things for many clients, and I found later that such was the Golden Rule of travel. I owe something also to those long imaginary trips I used to take across the maps in the school geography, because I had to draw so greatly on my imagination that I have learned to use that imagination in the more corporeal travel of my later years.

One thing most travelers miss is the language. It is something more than the convenience of ordering hot water or poached eggs. The language gives one the spirit of a people. A deafened man is the last in the world to learn and use a foreign language. God knows, he has hard enough work to learn and use his own. I will say, however, that if I were a hearing person I should be ashamed to visit France without the ability to talk French. And I am not hiding behind my disability. I have gone as far in

French as one without ears can go. The way of it was this. I was planning to buy that splendid John Lane edition of Anatole France, when my wife said: “The idea of your buying French works in translation, when you could so easily learn to read them in the language in which they were written!” I did not think I could, but I have a respect for my wife’s opinion, and so I tried, and sure enough, it was easy.

I had never learned French in my youth — nor much of anything else. So I started from scratch. I was commuting between White Plains and New York City, and had each day eighty minutes of time not otherwise disposed of. Twenty minutes was enough for newspapers, which gave me an hour a day. I bought an easy French book and began reading it, and when I finished took a harder one, and kept on for two years until I could read a novel by Victor Hugo with ease, and one by Flaubert without too much difficulty. I never learned the list of irregular verbs — English has a longer list — nor looked inside a French grammar. I use a French dictionary, that is, one in which the definitions are French, the kind a Frenchman would use, and I do not use that if I can help it, that is, until I have exhausted every other method of determining the meaning of a word. This is also easier than it

sounds. Frequently a French word means just what you think it does. Our languages have many common roots. And frequently the meaning in the author's mind is not in any dictionary. You can often recognize the class a noun belongs to, as birds or trees, even when you do not know what bird or what tree. As you read on, you find out. And some of the words are so inexpressibly beautiful you never forget them. I cannot, of course, learn to speak French or understand it when spoken, — in which I am at least no worse off than with my own tongue, — but I can read signs, directions, programmes, and especially the local newspapers; and it all helps me to absorb the life of the country, gives a certain sympathy which is a great help to understanding. The only countries I know at all are parts of England, Italy, and France. English, of course, I know as well as I ever shall. The English are especially hard to hear. I get more from an Italian or Frenchman, because of his instinctive dramatic temperament. No Frenchman or Italian hesitates to make himself ridiculous in order to make himself understood; but the English are quite as difficult as the Southerners, though in each instance the way of speaking is more beautiful than the speech the deaf can hear. With the help of my French, and of course the background of Latin I owe to Miss

McCall, I am feeling my way toward Italian. And each of these things fills my life, and gives it purpose and direction to compensate for the loss of unrestricted conversation. The rose gardener pinches off some of his buds and the remaining ones bloom more abundantly. When I read about the rose in the old *McGuffey Primer* I mistook its thorn for a throne. It may be I shall yet realize that all thorns may be thrones if misread carefully enough.

XXV

DOMESTIC RELATIONS

It must not be thought that I grew up without any social life whatever. Though held in check by diffidence and deafness, I had a lively interest in people, but always my choice of friends was censored by my inability to hear. Even the simple and primitive social diversions of a small Western town in the eighties were something of an ordeal. Many a time in the course of an evening have I walked by a door without mustering sufficient courage to ring the bell, all the while rehearsing my opening sentences so as to make a running start and get as far as possible in the conversation before being marooned. Thus dependent on the good will of others, I was not long in learning that women had more of the kind of patience necessary to talk with me than men, and older women than those of my own age. Not only is a woman's face more legible than a man's, but she has more sympathy and understanding, and so, while I lacked and needed the tonic quality of a man's conversation, I had a circle of friends who tolerated me, and drew me out, and enabled me to share in the conversation.

In my native town it was the custom on summer

evenings to sit on the porch in the dark, and when friends dropped in they joined the group. It was informal and pleasant; a round of such gatherings was a delightful way to spend an evening. But how I hated them! Light was necessary to me, as I needed my eyes to supplement my ears. Often I have joined such a group without knowing who was present, unable to see the faces, getting no help from the voices, and hardly daring to speak because of unknown hearers. It was such a porch party which put an end to my first romance. I made my calls as far as possible on one person at a time, and indoors when it was dark. Even in my boyhood I became fairly expert at creating diversions to break up a group and reunite it in different relations more favorable to me, and all plans for outings and entertainments were analyzed from the angle of how I should be situated. And so I made some progress in such society as was open to me; but this was not the real society of that small town. For even in that young municipality there was a social set, the descendants of the first settlers, mostly Presbyterians and Congregationalists, for society followed denominational lines. My mother was a Baptist, and Baptists and Methodists ranked lower socially, not only because they were poorer but because they frowned on cards and dancing, which were the chief

social diversions. It seems ironic that the social leader of the smart set, the Ward McAllister of our Four Hundred, was a young Jew, whose wedding, by the way, evoked a shower of costly presents, which he callously auctioned off when he left the town for good, giving his friends an opportunity to buy them back.

But I insisted on learning to dance. Dancing was technically forbidden to college students, and the girls in the female dormitory were not allowed to attend, but the boys “boarded ’round” — there was no men’s dormitory — and decided the question to suit their own inclinations. I was a town boy and therefore under my parents’ jurisdiction. Mother was true to her Puritan tradition, but father waxed sarcastic. By all means let me learn to be graceful, even though I did not amount to anything else. Taking advantage of the division in the house, I joined the dancing class and learned easily, because of a certain inborn sense of rhythm. I could not hear the master’s instructions, but I could see what he did and I became a good dancer, only to lose the accomplishment almost at once because of inability to hear. What dancing I did was to an imaginary time that ran in my head, and synchronized with that of the orchestra. But I missed the stimulus of the music, and like everything that depended on

hearing, I abandoned it as soon as I realized that my performance left something to be desired. The dances, be it understood, were the sedate and decorous dances of thirty-five years ago, when a man who held his partner too close was criticized, and what was “too close” was the subject of earnest debate. Our formal balls closed with a german or cotillion, during which I learned that I was not a popular partner. I decided to abandon the effort to be a butterfly and remain content with the grace I had presumably acquired.

My social successes were not achieved in the ball-room, nor for that matter at the interminable progressive-euchre parties, but in quieter circles where books were discussed. This was in the homes of what the gayer set called old maids, meaning women with minds sufficiently cultivated to derive little edification from the conversation of young men of the social set, and who did not have the frivolous accomplishments which made them sought after by hostesses anxious to attract young men. They took an interest in me and let me talk. I have no doubt they were terribly bored, but they earned my everlasting gratitude.

It seemed unlikely I should ever marry. There were two insurmountable obstacles, one pathologic, the other economic. I shrank from incurring

further responsibilities to complicate a life already complex. I had suffered much from deafness in my family as well as in myself. Otologists say that deafness is not hereditary, and so when it runs riot through several generations it must be a predisposition that is inherited. Well, this predisposition has much to answer for in our family. It begins with my paternal grandfather, who was quite deaf. Two of his children suffered, one of them my father. It seems a strange coincidence that my mother should lose her hearing in middle life, because in her case inheritance had no part. My father's sister was a deaf mute. Both of my brothers are deaf. In all these instances deafness came later in life than with me, and was less severe. I don't know whether being surrounded by so much deafness was an advantage or a drawback, but it certainly did make communication difficult. And naturally it made me think a great deal about the transmission of such an inheritance to a new generation.

And aside from this, I was still in the dark as to what I was to do to earn a living. I realized that living with a man whose ears could not be depended on for even the simplest of demands would be a hardship, even if he were prosperous. And so in my cooler moments I determined to avoid the risk. Of course the determination wavered at times. The

early years were not without romances, because the tête-à-tête style of conversation that was necessary led to closer acquaintance. But my anomalous situation seemed to deprive these tentative love-affairs of the decisiveness necessary to bring them to a head. And so it happened that I went through my long apprenticeship to life, and had launched the business in which I was a proud and happy partner, before I took the step which was to have so profound an influence on my destiny.

One Sunday night I hurried up to the flat of my friends, the Purdys, to show them a new hearing-device I had just obtained. This was the stitch that Dr. Bell had dropped when he stumbled on the telephone, and which his assistant, Hutchinson, had picked up: an electrical device, parent of all the little black boxes we deafened now carry about like an army of camera fiends. The rooms were crowded as always on Sunday nights, and at length Mrs. Purdy said, “Bring your instrument over here and let Angie talk to you through it. I want you to know her better.” Mrs. Purdy has had her wish. I now know that lady better than I know anyone else in the world, for in the course of a few years she became my wife, and has talked to me through various hearing-devices for twenty years.

She was wonderfully equipped for the job. Her

life had been a hard one, full of sacrifice for others, which had quickened her sympathies and taught her tact and patience, all of which she has needed. With her help I have worked out a technique of living. She has softened my asperities, largely by correcting and editing the erroneous impressions my deafness has given me. I am not patient, tractable, and philosophical by nature. On the contrary, I am suspicious and rebellious. For years I blamed the world for its conspiracy of silence. I had needed an interpreter, loyal to my interests, who could tell me that the world was at heart kindly and well-intentioned and was really saying the friendliest and most amiable things. She has been willing to give up her own interests and go my way.

The wife of a deaf man has a hard life. No matter how adept he may be with lip reading and artificial aids to hearing, she must act as his interpreter, repeating to him what has been said, and sometimes stepping in at the critical moment and acting on her own initiative. And the deaf man, while grateful for the service so constantly and tactfully rendered, minds both solutions. It hurts his pride not to be able to take his proper part in all the little necessary negotiations by which life is lived. It is his place to answer the telephone, speak to the gardener, buy the tickets, engage the rooms, settle with the cabman,

and do all these things gracefully and even gallantly. Therefore he feels more inept at failing in these small crises than in the greater issues. He does not like the implication that he is not the head of the house, that all his decisions are made for him, and that he must play this passive and sometimes humiliating part all his life. But since it must be done, he is fortunate who has a wife, as I have, who fills her hard rôle with tact and patience.

This confession brings me to the plane on which I am now living. It is only in the last ten years that I have been able to throw off all pretense and accept frankly and fully the life that my ears allow. I have now sloughed off all — or nearly all — the contacts and relations that took up my time without giving me any pleasure and satisfaction in return. I have reconstructed my life on the only basis on which I can live it. I wrote all this in a piece not long ago and earned considerable reputation among the deafened as a philosopher, when the *Atlantic Monthly* published it. The hard-of-hearing in all lands wrote me to that effect and made me think I had done a good work. Their letters warmed my heart and I glowed with satisfaction when I read them. But that piece has its drawback. The other day I lost my patience in some particularly difficult situation, and railed at the lot of a deaf man, when

my wife gently reminded me that I had set up as philosopher, and I realized that now I had to live up to that damned article all my life.

The experts who measure hearing with instruments of precision say I have fifteen per cent left. But my case is better than those who become deaf with the years. I have had a lifetime of practice, preparation, apprenticeship, and nothing the future holds can unduly disturb me. I hear what little I do hear with the joint aid of lip reading and the last of the long dynasty of electrical hearing-devices. For me neither is sufficient alone, and even together they frequently fail. It interests me that the instrument I now use is the same make with which the late Edward de Coppet heard the music of his beloved Flonzaley Quartette. Although deaf, music was his passion, and he founded and maintained this organization, which Henry Holt says was probably the best string quartette ever assembled. And Henry Holt himself is becoming deaf.

Music is my wife's greatest interest, one I cannot share with her, and she has put it partly aside, and joined in my enthusiasms instead. Together we planned and built our home and furnished it, created our flower gardens, gathered the library, and made frequent trips abroad, and in doing all these things I used her ears as freely as though they were my own.

No wonder she has little time for other pursuits. She is quick at putting me in touch with any situation. A name or word, spoken without a sound, gives me the clue. The other night I was to speak at a meeting of the Institute of Graphic Arts. It was necessary that I should know what was said by the friend who introduced me. She gave me a summary of his talk while he was making it, — sufficient for my purpose, — so that I might include some recognition of his kind words in what I said. Thus by various shifts and devices we manage to compass between us a certain amount of necessary contacts, and friends have learned to tell her what they want me particularly to know. After each excursion into the hearing world I receive a syllabus of what was said, and find that my own impression was quite frequently wrong.

XXVI

A ROUGH SKETCH OF A PHILOSOPHER

THE unwise attempt to keep up with a hearing world gives many deaf people a distracted air. It is perhaps unfortunate that we deafened can go so long without detection. The halt and blind are spared the temptation to practise this innocent camouflage. It is no use for them to pretend. But the choice is offered us of the part we will play. We frequently choose foolishly, preferring to pass as slow, thick-headed, stupid persons, rather than as the quick-witted deaf persons we really are.

For the deaf are called on to perform prodigies of deduction. In every communication that goes on between them and their fellows they are working double, devoting most of their energy to finding out what it is all about and carrying on the conversation with one hand, as it were. I have frequently reconstructed the whole colloquy from a single chance remark, as a paleontologist restores a dinosaur from a single bone. It is a fine indoor sport, but the waste is enormous.

I have been for fifty years what Mr. Nitchie's School of Lip Reading prefers to call "deafened" — to distinguish us from mutes. The census says

there are 70,000 deaf in this country, but that count did not include me. On the other hand, specialists say that everyone is deaf; but they merely mean that normal hearing is something too acute for civilized life. There are four million of us — the O. Henry number — who hear with difficulty but who talk normally, even abnormally at times.

I have become a master of the art of being deaf. It is an acquired art. People are no more born with it than they are born bachelors. A bachelor is something more than a man who has failed of marrying, and the art of being deaf is something more than loss of hearing.

Nature has been of great assistance. Few things are more significant than the way living things adapt themselves to hard and unusual conditions. The hermit crab soon fits himself to his borrowed shell. The blind fish in Mammoth Cave have dispensed with a sense they do not need. The printer's occupation makes his thumb callous; the miller's thumb becomes sensitive. In *Ethics of the Dust* — does anyone read Ruskin now? — the crystals are shown accepting with bravery and cheerfulness impositions that change and alter their natural forms. Who has not seen a tree with a great stone embedded in its trunk? Thus life grows round a hard fact, such as loss of one of the five wits, and shapes itself anew.

In the pursuit of my researches I have made a few discoveries and some inventions which I am about to share with a deafened world, after the amiable custom of professional men.

The great discovery is that old one with which Brer Æsop's fox consoled himself about the grapes, succinctly if bluntly paraphrased by the philosophically deaf old lady to whom a friend's polite but utterly unimportant remark was finally communicated.

"Umph! Us deaf folks don't miss much."

And when I asked Mr. Edison why he of all persons did not avail himself of one of the electrical devices for making hearing less difficult, he said: —

"Too busy. A lot of time is wasted in listening. If I had one of those things my wife would want to talk to me all the time."

Discussing a banquet at which it might be politic for me to be "seen," I said to a friend: —

"I'm not going to any more of those dinners. It's such a bore to sit there and not hear any of the speeches."

"Not so much of a bore as if you heard them," was his feeling reply.

After all, I thought, are not the deaf rather inclined to overrate the mere accomplishment of hearing? So many people hear to so little purpose. The

deaf fondly imagine that hearing itself is the pleasure, without considering that what is an end to them is merely a means to others.

Audition is not without its drawbacks, and deafness is not without its compensations. For us a noisy world is soft-pedalled. The dog baying the moon, the cock's shrill clarion, the echoing horn, are all part of vocal Nature as well as the nightingale's liquid notes. And we evade so many tiresome inflictions with a clear conscience. It only remains to put the time thus salvaged to the best use.

I was fourteen years old when I first came face to face with the problem. I was beginning Latin in high school. My teacher was a woman of rare sympathy and helpfulness. She saw I liked Latin but that I would never get anywhere in the classroom. She took me as a private pupil in her own time after hours, with no other reward than that of helping a discouraged boy keep up with his classes. I owe it to her that I have read more Latin than the average college course requires, and that it was a pleasure. I owe to her the discovery of the priceless refuge there is in books.

But I owe her more than that. She gave me a point of view that has made even deafness a spice of living. After forty years, I still remember the enthusiasm with which she once said: —

“Earnest, I want you to succeed, not in spite of your deafness, but on account of it.”

Let me pay her the humble tribute of setting her name here. There are many who owe something to the fact that Ida Miller McCall was their teacher. She gave to each the inspiration he needed. She was a teacher of character as well as of Latin. It is part of the tragic irony of life that this woman, who so intuitively selected and imparted the mental attitude that would make deafness tolerable, should later lose her own hearing. The infliction — peculiarly cruel to one of her temperament, for she was an artist in conversation — she bore to the end of her life with the same smiling philosophy that made her the influence she was. She often spoke of her years devoted to teaching me as her apprenticeship.

There ought to be a book of short biographies of the famous deaf, telling how they met their problem. One wonders if they attained success in spite of or on account of their deafness. E. S. Martin who so nobly fills the editorial chair of *Life* — his work radiates a mellowed and sunny philosophy, as if he had found life good; Thomas Edison, by no means so “sweet” a character, but busy and successful, disdaining annoyances of dulled ears with an impatient gesture; Sir Joshua Reynolds, putting all his great ability into an art where hearing is of

slight importance; Ludwig van Beethoven, composing some of his greatest works after losing the faculty the unthinking would deem absolutely essential.

One of the most successful enterprises of Charles Knight, the publisher, was *Kitto's Pictorial Bible*. Kitto¹ was so deaf as to be practically dumb. Ryland gives a pleasant picture of the relations between these two. The publisher kept the writer in work as long as he lived, and profited by it as the doers of good deeds should.

One of the most famous letters in the famous “Life” is the scathing one Doctor Johnson wrote to the Earl of Chesterfield after an unfruitful attempt to make the peer a patron of the Dictionary. Apparently the Earl had refused to see the Doctor when he called. The sympathies of the deaf will be with Chesterfield, one of whose letters, dated the very year of Johnson's unsuccessful suit, Croker quotes: —

“My deafness is extremely increased, and cuts me wholly off from the society of others.”

Doctor Johnson's conversational methods were not such as would make a deaf man feel easy. Cannot you imagine him thundering: “Sir, I am bound

¹*Memoirs of John Kitto*, by J. E. Ryland, Edinburgh, 1856, is a human document of the utmost interest to the deaf; also Kitto's own account of his experiences, entitled *The Lost Senses*.

to furnish elevating conversation. I am not bound to furnish ears to understand it.”

Some of us have missed our opportunity of standing godfather to some great dictionary under similar circumstances, and have been roundly scored into the bargain.

Every deaf person should read *Society in America*, by Harriet Martineau.¹ The author gathered all the information contained in those two thick volumes by a personal visit, during which she toured the country from the Atlantic to the Mississippi and talked with everyone.

“I labored under only one peculiar disadvantage that I am aware of,” she says in the Introduction, “but that one is incalculable. I mean my deafness. This does not endanger the accuracy of my information, I believe, as far as it goes, because I carry a trumpet of remarkable fidelity; an instrument, moreover, which seems to exert some winning power, by which I gain more in tête-à-têtes than is given to people who hear general conversation. Probably its charm consists in the new feeling of ease and privacy in conversing with a deaf person.”

¹Paris, Baudrey's European Library, 1837. Even more interesting in this connection is Miss Martineau's Autobiography (Boston, 1869). There are many characteristic incidents and anecdotes which will be read with sympathy by the deafened, as, for instance, when Miss Martineau was a neighbor of the Wordsworths at Ambleside, she was reluctant to call on them in the evening because the old poet was in the habit of taking his teeth out after dinner, and she had difficulty in understanding him under those circumstances. “Letter to the Deaf” is another example of her common-sense and robust philosophy.

I would like to quote the whole brave paragraph.

We cannot draw any consolation from the belief that our condition is tragic. It is n't. All literature is against us. The hero is never deaf. The deaf man furnishes only the comedy. William de Morgan, called to account by an exasperated deaf lady for making Aunt Izzy funny, plaintively answers, “I did n't make her funny. She *was* funny.” But no one found Blind Jim funny. And literature is right. It is backed up by life. We all smile at the deaf man's slips, but never at the blind man's. Pathos is inherent in the one, and not in the other.

These are some of the things life and books have taught me. Out of them and hundreds of other experiences and adventures I have made my little philosophy, which has stood me in good stead, and which I am trying to compress into a brief and handy Manual for the Use of the Deafened.

XXVII

ON THE TECHNIQUE OF BEING DEAF

To begin with the first lesson and the hardest: it is imperative to admit that one is deaf — admit it to one's self and tell the world, and accept the penalties as well as the compensations. The compensations outweigh the penalties, as you will see. Deafness of the kind known as hard of hearing — and how hard it is! — grades from a defect scarcely noticeable to total eclipse of sound from the outer world. Somewhere along that line one must give up the struggle of trying to pass as a normal-hearing person. Most of us wait too long, buoyed up by the same false pride that makes people wear wigs. When my hair got thin I was encouraged by my barber to let it grow long on the sides and brush it over the top, in the vain hope that people would think it grew there. I soon found I was deceiving no one — not even myself.

As some corn-fed philosopher remarked: "Old maids is really the happiest — after they quits strugglin'." Likewise the deafened are happiest once they renounce the innocent pose of hearing and proceed to accept all the drawbacks — but also all the benefits — of being deaf.

And what are those benefits? First, greatly increased leisure. The deaf have all the time saved from not trying to do what they cannot do to spend in doing better what they can. We all have our twenty-four hours a day, as Arnold Bennett has demonstrated, but we deafened may have a bonus besides.

After all, even the deaf are not deaf all the time. They are not deaf when there is no occasion to hear. According to the subjective theory — which I advise all deaf people to adopt — sound does not exist unless there are ears to hear. As I remember the sentence from the old schoolbook: “Niagara thundered in silence for thousands of years until there appeared upon earth a being with ears.” I find it profitable and amusing to cut down the time when I am unavoidably deaf and increase that when I am on a par with the acute-eared. It works like the old dial-motto, which counted only the hours the sun shone.

I have thus not unbroken, unrelieved deafness to deal with, but intermittent deafness — say deafness of two or three hours a day. All human contact, all need of hearing comes under two heads; the unimportant talk that is necessary, and the important talk that is had for its own sake — conversation, the exchange of thought with our fellow beings.

The latter is optional and depends on temperament, even with the hearing. An unsocial hearing person may have less conversation than a social deaf person.

But the talk that is necessary for the purpose of living cannot be escaped. No deaf person is so primitive he never goes shopping or takes a journey.

One afternoon I joined a long line in front of the Pullman window in Philadelphia. As always, I was conscious of my deafness. I rehearsed in my mind the form of application that would produce results as quickly as the time and place imperatively demanded. I decided to use a question which could be answered "Yes" or "No."

"Can you give me a seat on the four o'clock train to New York?"

Evidently the answer was "Yes," but there was a condition.

"You mean a seat in a sleeping-car?"

No, that was n't it. The girl behind the grill, with just a touch of impatience, apparently repeated her original statement.

I made one more attempt.

"You mean on another train?"

The answer to that was unmistakably "No." I took a sporting chance, I laid down my money,

and thus secured the customary folded green slip.

I waited my train with only a slight misgiving. I had “something” on the four o’clock train. I tendered my slip to the Pullman conductor who took it and directed me to the club car. Of course. One more question and I would have completed the circuit.

One who hears as unconsciously as he breathes is amazed at so complex a situation over so simple a transaction. But to the deafened these problems occur with monotonous frequency. It is his life. He must constantly match his wits against his deafness to extract from the world the information necessary to carry on the business of living. No matter how well he does it, he never gets credit for the real mental agility shown. He is merely thought less deaf than he is.

So the technique begins with what might be called the friction of life: the constant colloquies with salespeople, clerks, ticket agents, waiters, policemen, car conductors, and others that constitute collectively the machine of living. As a class they have one irritating quality. They confuse physical defects with mental. They think a deaf person is obtuse. With this class the rule of acknowledging deafness is defaulted to good advantage. Even if time permits the establishing of the

new basis, what is the other party with his limited imagination and resources going to do? No, it is up to you to take advantage of your position as the provoker of the interview, to make the terms on which it is to be conducted, and to make those terms as favorable to yourself as possible.

Begin with the selection of the individual to be approached. This is not always possible. People behind grilles in banks, offices, and railway stations are fixtures that must be handled differently, but on the streets you may select the person to whom you put your question with as much care as a professional beggar. People of Latin extraction, for instance, always respond with a gesture. The Italian peanut-vender accompanies his volume of words with a gesture so eloquent it almost deposits you at the door.

The second rule is to frame a question that must be answered, Yes, or No. Yes and No are always recognizable. To be sure, the answer is sometimes No, followed, of course, with the right information; but as a process of elimination it works wonders. There are but few directions in which one can go. In a railroad station pick out the most likely-looking train and say to the man in uniform, "Is this the New York train?" If it is n't, then your list of trains is reduced by one. I

am describing only desperate cases. You average much better than this. Sometimes you pick the right one the first time. Sometimes your informant points to the right one.

Perhaps I had better say here that the deaf person always prepares for as many emergencies as possible. He studies the time-table in advance. He reads the signs on the walls and in the train shed. He soon learns — and public utility servants should bless him for this — never to ask an unnecessary question. I always buy a map of a strange city, in this country as well as in Europe. I learn it by heart. And as I walk proudly down a strange street in an unfamiliar foreign city I realize that I get on better than even my most acute-eared compatriots. It sounds like a lot of work, but not more than is necessary to play a good hand at bridge. And it is just as much fun.

I always inquire the price when shopping, for the moral effect on the salesman. In small shops I tender a bill I know must be larger than the amount named. In big stores I read the sales-slip upside down as the salesman makes it out. Also in some stores the price is marked on the goods.

The menu card is now common enough to make ordering a meal comparatively easy. In country hotels, where the card is rattled off by a blonde

person just abaft your weaker ear, I generally throw myself on the mercy of the waitress, and ask her to bring me what she thinks is best to-day, adding that I usually take coffee.

Before I cast off from the bell boy who pilots me to my room, I anticipate whatever I am going to want and order it. The boy is instructed to enter without knocking when he brings it. Of course the night clerk cannot "call" me, but I have learned to "set" myself for any hour — a trick not hard to learn. And the man who awoke several hours too late and found a paper tucked beneath his door on which a considerate bell boy had written, "Sir, it is six o'clock, get up," was not even deaf.

These are but some of the shifts and devices with which I get through those hours when it is my destiny to be deaf. Through all the complicated machinery of living my subconscious mind is functioning in ways like these, automatically, just as you learn not to step on the top stair which is n't there.

To these few hours I must add the time spent in what the United States Census so delightfully calls a gainful occupation, and then I have all the rest of the day for myself, time off, to be deaf or not, just as I choose.

I have taken the deaf man's job for granted, as I

am talking to those who have found a way to make a living, but are rather at loose ends as to what to do with the living when they have made it. My own job requires a good deal of hearing, but I have built up a machine to take care of it, something like that which mitigates my other contacts. I believe most men who were not born deaf have got shaken down in some occupation and evolved the proper offensive and defensive mimicry, and are more concerned with things outside office-hours.

Something must be said here about aids to hearing. It is just as well for the deaf to arrange their lives without dependence on these substitutes, and then get all the help out of them they can. The various forms of the telephone housed in little black boxes are a great help, especially in those necessary conversations by which the humbler part of living is carried on. I have one, in fact I have a whole flock of them, and I carry one with me as far as the exigencies of life permit. I am frequently stopped at the doors of museums and galleries by the custodians, with “Here, you gotta check that; photographing ain’t allowed; it’s let to a party.” But these instruments, while useful, do not take the place of ears, not even to the extent that glasses replace eyes.

Then there is lip reading, a wonderful art which

some practise with a dexterity that is little short of marvelous, and which all of us utilize to some extent. But it must be admitted that the good Lord has created few people with legible countenances.

What conversation the deaf man gets will be with one of these two substitutes. Only at rare intervals will he know that finest flower of civilization, real talk. He will find that by a perfectly natural law his friends are inevitably those who speak distinctly. He will never know the others well, however desirable they may be.

If he has become by chance a part of a social group, one of three courses is offered him. He may depend on an interpreter, one of those clear-speaking persons who will give him the leads; or he may interrupt with a topic evolved from his own insides as the spider spins her web and catch a few flies until the subject is changed again; or he may break off and segregate a unit of the group for a tête-à-tête, as one does at formal dinners. It will not matter much. Most people are merely waiting for an opportunity to introduce their own topic, anyway, and a lot of casual conversation is merely amiable noises, greetings, inquiries that demand and expect no answer, obvious remarks about our common weather — the deaf soon learn to discount these. We can make amiable noises ourselves. Relevance

and appositeness are not required, even between hearing people.

As you see, the fox makes out a good case for the percentage of acid in the grapes.

And now we come to the most delightful phase of this art of being deaf. All that has gone before is but the dreary practising of scales preliminary to playing a Hungarian Rhapsody, the reiterated “keep your shawl down and your eye on the ball” of the professional, to be able to send a long drive down the centre of the fairway — tiresome but necessary.

Those dull stretches when one must be deaf willy-nilly, because they are the hours when the business of living is carried on according to rules set up by a hearing world, are No Man’s Land to the deafened. But there is ample compensation in those other times when, though we may not be able to hear, we are no longer deaf because there is nothing to hear; when we command our time and our entertainment and create our own world, and see to it that all the rules are favorable to those who lack ears.

I find it worth while to make a formal list of the liabilities and assets in the way of recreation, so that I may know just where I stand, to separate

those things in which hearing is essential from those where deafness is no bar and where it may be even an advantage.

<i>On my Index Expurgatorius are:—</i>	<i>I have left:—</i>
Conversation in the best sense	Books
The theatre	Pictures, moving and stationary
Lectures	Art—painting, sculpture, architecture and ap- plied art
Public dinners, and most private ones	Natural science
Music	Scenery
Social dancing	Travel, on foot, train, boat, horse, and motor
Games like "What is my thought like?"	Exhibition dancing, and all kinds of spectacles and pageants
Being read aloud to.	Games like golf and whist
	Nearly all hobbies.

I add these two columns and strike a balance. When mitigations and compensations are added, the assets exceed the liabilities, and I am, from a happiness-viewpoint, solvent.

Nor are all the liabilities total. I have often read a play in advance and derived some entertainment from seeing it without hearing it. And in France and Italy I have done more. There I have an advantage over the visitor who does not understand the language. I get more out of the acting through my long training in observation: the seeing eye, sharpened beyond anything Sherlock Holmes utilized. I saw *Après l'Opéra* at the Grand Guignol, and

repeated the plot to my wife afterward. I had not missed an essential detail. This faculty adds immensely to the entertainment furnished by street scenes in Continental cities, this ability to see all there is, which many hearing people lack entirely.

Some one has said — boy, page Mr. Bartlett — that when God closes one window he opens another a little wider. I have tried to help Him and swing my window altogether open.

Just as soon as I realized that I was dependent entirely on myself for amusement, I took pains to equip myself with a number of self-contained, self-starting recreations. Indeed every man should do at least one thing as different as possible from what he does for a living. If he has a white-collar, white-paper job, he should have also a hand-dirtying hobby. He should paint, model, carve, fish, dig — do something that will give him the feel of things, earth or tools, to make him a complete human being. But what is merely healthy balance for the normal man is essential for the deaf one. He is denied the harmless and amusing time-killer and space-filler that conversation is. He must be prepared with a number of things to take its place and give him the sense of a full life.

I have been unusually fortunate in this respect. I learned to play early in life, and I learned to use my

imagination as the chief toy. My mother had little money for the boughten kinds, but she had plenty of imagination, and my deafness taught me to depend on myself. I wonder if even children know how to play nowadays.

In consequence, I have never been bored, except by one thing. I thought at first it was my duty to stick around where conversation was being indulged in — before I made my great discovery and took a reprieve for life. It is the proper thing to urge the deaf to mingle with their fellows as much as possible and try to hear. It is one of the most fatiguing things in the world, effort without result — like fozzling one's drive. I gave it up. The price was too high. I really began to live when I realized this and gave myself wholly to a deaf man's recreations.

And what are they? Printing is one. I learned the trade as a boy, followed it until I attained the proud eminence of a card in the Typographical Union, and thereby opened my little window a bit wider. I do not now work at it as a trade, having gone into another line, — in which printing is a great help, — but my knowledge gives me another interest in books apart from reading them. I can look at a collection of rare books and taste the pleasures of a connoisseur. My name is on several of the committees of the Institute of Graphic Arts,

of which I am a useless but enthusiastic member, simply as a tribute to my great love.

Some day this hobby will flower into a private press with a fancy name — how would The Upwey Press sound? — and I will play with printing like Horace Walpole and Sir Egerton Brydges.

Meanwhile I work in wood, with a lathe and carving tools. Wood-working shares with the outside of a horse the quality of being good for the inside of a man. It is a great soother. A woodcarver in Grand Rapids told a reporter who was wondering at the contented state of labor in the wood-working crafts that you had to have a good disposition to work on wood.

I make models of ancient ships. This opens wide a big door. There is the excuse for hunting old books and prints to learn how they looked and were rigged — books like Captain John Smith's *Sea Grammar*,¹ or *L'art de bâtir les vaisseaux*.² I am a member of two Societies, one in England and one in this country, whose members either collect or make these delightful bits of craftsmanship. The making calls for the exercise of many arts, and like one of De Morgan's books, it lasts a long time. And when completed it becomes, if one has been

¹ London, John Haviland, 1627.

² Amsterdam, chez David Mortier, 1719.



A miniature by M. R. Welch

I MAKE MODELS OF ANCIENT SHIPS

faithful, not only an historical document but a bit of decoration as well.

I have a colony of bees which are sufficiently amiable to permit me to take out the brood combs and find the queen, when there is some one to see me show off and exclaim: "Don't they ever sting you?" I also battle with beetles and worms for the satisfaction of raising a few of the varieties of roses.

If I play a rotten game of golf, it is not because I am deaf. There is no reason why a deaf man should not be a very good golfer. With me it is perhaps because I enjoy a walk as much with a blackthorn stick in my hand as with a mashie. The city of New York has built me a beautiful walk running beside my home and extending many miles north and south. This is the Ashokan Dam aqueduct, on whose dorsal vertebræ I am free from the menace of the motor car.

This list of mine does not represent any unusual ability or training. What little I know I learned from books. There are few things one cannot learn from books, and the learning is part of the game. Books come first on my list, naturally, but little need be said about them here. It has all been said. Everything in *The Booklover's Enchiridion* about the value of books should be underscored for the deaf.

You may not care for reading. Oliver Wendell

Holmes expressed his admiration for one who sweetly and honestly said, “I hate books,” but he was n’t deaf. However, a liking for books is not necessary to my scheme of salvation. Turn back to the list of permitted interests and see how large is the choice. I have described my own diversions merely to show that it can be done.

Do not get the idea that all this means dispensing with friends. Friendship is not conversation. The things a deaf man can do to reclaim the waste places of his life and find happiness in doing have another rare quality. They are a substitute for conversation in a quite different way. They enable him to account for himself to others, to acquire a new interest in the eyes of his friends, to win a consideration that his amateur performance as a listener will not give.

Thus I find myself at fifty-four busy and happy, with a very satisfactory “expectancy” allowed by my insurance company, with a life packed full of the most exciting and enthralling things to do, and wondering whether I am going to have time, even if I realize that expectancy, to do them all.

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